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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you support Bordallo's "Bonitan Tåsi" bill, which would give Guam management rights over the Marianas Marine Monument?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Policy Repeal

It's time to repeal the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, the nation's top defense officials say.

NATION...Page 15

Pesticide Regs

Businesses can avoid pesticide violations by complying with CNMI regulations.

ENVIRONMENT...Page 17

Oscar Noms

"Avatar" and "The Hurt Locker" lead the Academy Awards with nine nominations each.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 19

'Chinese man reached Guam from Rota using inflatable boat'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A Chinese man successfully reached Guam from Rota using an inflatable boat and an outboard engine in July 2009, according to a special agent of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Special agent Isra D. Harahap stated in his report it is believed that the success of this Chinese national's entry into Guam is known within the Chinese community on Saipan.

Harahap prepared the report in connection with the arrest by federal authorities on Saturday of five Chinese nationals who allegedly attempted to unlawfully enter Guam by boarding two inflatable boats at the West Harbor docks on Rota.

The ICE special agent said that in July 2009 a Chinese man on Saipan purchased an inflatable boat and an outboard engine from China.

The individual, Harahap said, flew to Rota by commercial airline with the inflatable boat and outboard engine.

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GOPs gain control of Saipan delegation

CNMI consumer counsel Michael Ernest gestures as he makes a presentation on consumer protection laws in yesterday's general membership meeting of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce at The Palms Resort in San Roque. Ernest also gave practical tips for businesses to ensure they are on the right side of consumer protection laws.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Probes on food stamps, gas pricing, auto shops

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

CNMI consumer counsel Michael Ernest gave businesses yesterday a roundup of consumer protection laws in the Commonwealth, adding that investigations are either underway or planned on alleged food stamp purchases of cigarettes and beers, alleged gas price fixing, and alleged illegal practices of some auto repair shops, among other things.

Ernest was the guest speaker in yesterday's Saipan Chamber of Commerce general membership meeting at The Palms Resort in San Roque.

In his presentation, Ernest gave Chamber members and guests a roundup of the Disaster Price Freeze Act, the Unfair

CONTACT INFO
Consumer counsel: **664-2333**

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> "We thought we had the votes. We thought it would be 11-10 in our favor."
> —House Speaker Froilan C. Tenorio

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

On an 11-10 vote, Republican Rep. Ramon "Ray" A. Tebuteb got re-elected as chairman of the 21-member Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation during yesterday's session called by Covenant Speaker Froilan C. Tenorio.

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Benavente: Let's invite Obama to visit Saipan

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Benavente

House minority leader Rep. Diego Benavente (R-Saipan) said yesterday he will file a joint resolution formally asking President Barack Obama to also consider visiting the

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CPA terminates Tinian airport manager. PAGE 2
Froilan: I am not stepping down as speaker. **PAGE 3**

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Local

CPA terminates Tinian airport manager

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero has terminated the employment contract of Tinain airport manager Ike Perez for undisclosed reasons.

Saipan Tribune learned that a 30-day termination notice was issued to Perez this week.

Acting CPA board chair Thomas "Kiyu" Villagomez confirmed yesterday that he is aware of the executive director's decision and he expressed respect for the action, citing the move as a "management decision."

Perez has been the Tinian airport manager since 2004.

Saipan Tribune tried to call Deleon Guerrero yesterday but he did not answer his cell phone.

Some Tinian officials are now urging the CPA board to reconsider Perez's termination.

In a letter to the board yesterday, Tinian Mayor Ramon M. Dela Cruz, Tinian Delegation chair Sen. Jude Hofschneider, and Tinian Municipal Council head Patrick A. Manglona expressed support for Perez's retention. They said Perez's over 30 years of ports experience ranging from his service in the U.S. Air Force, Guam Airport Authority, Alliance Air, and Pacific Island Aviation are proof of his qualifications.

"Mr. Perez has efficiently managed Tinian CIP port projects to include airport taxiway, departure terminal, and repair of the pier. He is currently working on Tinian's instrument landing system project, the completion of the departure terminal, and the repair of the pier," they said in their letter to the board.

The lawmakers pointed out that Perez was even deemed qualified by the board to serve as acting executive director prior to the hiring of Efrain Camacho in 2008.

They described Perez as extremely knowledgeable of the Tinian ports operations and is a valuable adviser to the mayor and the Tinian leadership.

"Mr. Perez's service to the municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan over the past six years has been exemplary and the leadership is not aware of any reason why his employment should be terminated," the letter added.

Villagomez said they have yet to see the lawmakers' letter to the board as of yesterday.

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Information adapted from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, Learn the Signs. Act Early.
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Big Steps for Little Feet

Froilan: I am not stepping down as speaker

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

House Speaker Froilan C. Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) said yesterday he is not stepping down from his post at this time, contrary to what he described as a misunderstanding about a statement he made last week.

"I am not stepping down, at least not at this time," Tenorio told *Saipan Tribune* late yesterday afternoon.

Tenorio, who served as the fourth elected CNMI governor from 1994 to 1998, said he earlier contemplated about stepping down but decided against it after consulting with Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and other colleagues.

Even from the beginning, he said did not really want the speaker's post.

"What I feared about is happening. It's a full-time job, much more than any member of the Legislature. I'm hoping for a part-time Legislature. The speaker's position is keeping me from what I had intended to do like pushing for a lot of legislation like the Saipan casino bill. Being a speaker requires a lot of my time. I haven't introduced a single legislation since the 17th House [took office]," he said.

Tenorio

Tenorio said the speaker's job is a challenging one.

"But I love challenges," he said.

Rep. Raymond Palacios (Cov-Saipan), in a separate interview, said Covenant Party members asked about Tenorio's statement of stepping down when House Vice Speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (Cov-Saipan) presided over a session on Monday.

"She said 'everything's okay' so I personally thought he's not stepping down," he said.

Republican members, who comprise the minority bloc at the House, said they also learned about Tenorio's statement of stepping down but thought it's not final.

Even on day one of the 17th Legislature, Tenorio was a standout. During the organizational session, he initially did not vote for himself for the speaker's post when he was nominated. He later voted for himself.

Upon assuming his post as speaker, Tenorio said the House would pass a Fiscal Year 2010 budget bill within 30 days from Jan. 11 when the 17th Legislature took office.

A few days later, on Jan. 20, Tenorio asked Legislative Bureau director Glenna SP. Reyes to "vacate" her office "as soon as possible," but Senate President Paul Manglona (R-Rota) said Reyes' existing contract, which expires in September 2010, should be honored.

To date, Reyes still serves as Legislative Bureau director. Firing and hiring of the director needs the concurrence of both the House and Senate.

On Friday, Tenorio said if the Marianas Public Lands Trust does not agree to help the Northern Marianas Housing Corp., then he will ask the MPLT trustees to resign.

NMHC officials asked lawmakers for help in finding $5.84 million for the agency to meet its guarantor obligation in home loans that are delinquent and in default.

Man gets 32-day term for burglary conspiracy

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a 32-day prison term on one of four persons arrested last month for a burglary at an establishment where two laptops were stolen.

Presiding Judge Robert C. Naraja sentenced Alberto Villanueva to three years in prison, all suspended except for 32 days, for conspiracy to commit burglary.

Naraja gave the 23-year-old Villanueva credit for the 25 days he had already served in jail.

The judge ordered the defendant to serve the remaining seven days at the Department of Corrections.

He placed Villanueva on 11 months and 28 days of probation and required him to pay restitution, a $100 court assessment fee, and $100 probation fee.

Naraja also ordered the defendant to perform 100 hours of community service.

The Office of the Attorney General charged Villanueva and Kolmar Datius with theft and conspiracy to commit burglary.

Villanueva and counsel Vincent Seman signed a plea agreement with the government, represented by assistant attorney general Michael N. Evangelista.

Villanueva and Datius were among four persons arrested by police for reportedly breaking into the Fun Fun Central Entertainment Center in Finasisu on June 29, 2009. After getting two laptops, some members of the group reportedly traded the stolen items for methamphetamine or "ice" with an illegal drug distributor.

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Cruz accuses King of leading NMC down the 'wrong' path

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Gregorio Cruz Jr., president of Taotao Tano CNMI Inc. and former Northern Marianas College student, has accused Board of Regents chair Janet King of leading NMC down a path that could cost the college its accreditation.

In a grievance letter to NMC Staff Faculty president Joyce Taro on Tuesday, Cruz said that King is associated with individuals who actively sought to derail the college's accreditation last year. He provided nine names on the list, majority of whom were then instructors at the college.

Cruz said: "Ask yourself the question: Who is really behind the mutiny and the fiasco at NMC? The current chairwoman of the board [Janet King] is now conflicting herself on the current issues with NMC… Today, Ms. King is heading NMC to a path that will [cost] the accreditation of the only local college in our homeland."

Besides King, Cruz also lambasted interim president Lorraine Cabrera for rehiring former department chair Mark Haag.

Cabrera earlier said that as long as she's the interim president, she will not permit the hiring of former employees who have grievances with the college.

In a statement from NMC yesterday regarding Cruz's letter, acting interim president Dr. Patrick Moran clarified that Haag is not currently employed with the college.

Department chair Frank Sobolewski had announced at a recent assembly of students and employees that Haag was being re-employed at the college. *Saipan Tribune* learned that after finding out that no documents have been processed for Haag, the management advised that he cannot teach without the documents being processed.

Yesterday, Moran said NMC considers its human resources its most valuable asset. "Anyone who is qualified to apply for any vacancy are invited to apply," said Moran. "We are always looking for the best qualified applicants to join our team."

According to Moran, former NMC instructors and staff members can reapply for vacant positions if they meet the eligibility requirements. He said all applicants undergo a hiring process that includes certain procedures as well as an interview by a committee. The evaluation process also includes an evaluation of the applicant's past work history and educational experience.

ERRATUM

On the story "New Election for Northern Islands mayoral race" published on Monday, Feb. 1, the words "illegal votes" were inadvertently inserted twice in the sentence. The correct sentence should be "While the procedures adopted by the trial court to deduct illegal votes from the election results were proper, we hold that the trial court erred by declaring Rebuenog the election winner under 1 CMC § 6606." Our apologies.

CHINESE

From Page 1

"It was later learned that this person launched the inflatable boat from Rota East Harbor in the cover of darkness at night," the agent said.

The man's inflatable boat and outboard engine, Harahap said, were later found on a beach in Guam.

Harahap said investigation efforts by ICE agents have confirmed that the man arrived in Guam without proper entry.

The agent did not indicate in the report whether the individual has been found or arrested.

Harahap was the lead agent in charge of an undercover investigation into alien smuggling from Rota to Guam by boat. He said ICE investigated the case with the U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service.

BENAVENTE

From Page 1

CNMI when he and his family visit Guam in March.

Benavente, a former lieutenant governor and a former chairman of the House Committee on Foreign and Federal Relations, said it would be nice to have a formal invitation in the form of a House and Senate joint resolution.

"But it would be better if the governor and our delegate would also write a letter to the president, inviting him to visit the CNMI," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Saipan, the capital of the CNMI, is only about 138 miles from Guam.

A presidential visit to the CNMI, he said, comes at a time when the Commonwealth's immigration system came under federal control on Nov. 28, 2009, and that the massive military buildup in Guam also involves Tinian in the CNMI.

"We are at a significant time in Commonwealth history, with the federal government taking considerable control and authority over the islands. It would be a good gesture for the president to consider visiting," he said.

Two-thirds of the land on Tinian is leased to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Because Guam cannot accommodate all training for the relocating Marines, the military looks at Tinian to provide opportunities for training groups of 200 Marines or larger due to greater land availability.

Tinian is only about 100 miles or 160 kilometers away from Guam.

The draft environmental impact statement on the buildup said the proposed actions on Tinian include firing ranges for rifle known distance, automated combat pistol, platoon battle course, and field firing; and airspace use.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) had separately recognized the importance of a presidential visit to the Marianas, which is composed of Guam and the CNMI. Both said they have yet to receive more details from the White House about the presidential visit.

White House press secretary Robert Gibbs, in a Feb. 1 transcript of statements during a news briefing, said Obama "will visit Guam, where he will speak with U.S. service members on the island," adding that "we'll have more specific dates for you shortly after they are completely done with the pre-advance."

Benavente said the earlier a formal invitation is sent, the better for advance planning on the part of the White House.

PROBES

From Page 1

Business Practices Act, and the Consumer Protection Act.

His presentation also included practical tips on how businesses can ensure they remain on the right side of consumer protection laws, such as avoiding selling stale food, not engaging in deceptive and unfair business practices, not agreeing to or engaging in price fixing, and not raising the prices of basic consumer products in times of disasters, among other things.

"Good customer service keeps me away. While it's our job to regulate businesses, we're not anti-business. If you treat customers right, then you are following the law," said Ernest, who qualified that his presentation should not be taken as legal advice but an educational session for consumers and merchants.

Ernest, who was a Senate legal counsel before moving to the Office of the Attorney General last year, said a full-time investigator will soon be assigned to the OAG's Consumer Counsel Division for at least a year.

While he has been able to get help from investigators when needed, having a full-time investigator for the consumer counsel will make a lot of difference in investigating consumer complaints and enforcing consumer protection laws.

Violating consumer protection laws could result in civil penalty, imprisonment or both.

During the question-and-answer portion, Frank Stewart asked Ernest whether he as consumer counsel has been investigating alleged price fixing in the CNMI, to which Ernest said "yes."

On Nov. 12, 2009, a class action suit was filed in the CNMI Superior Court against Mobil and Shell for allegedly colluding to fix fuel prices in the Commonwealth.

Rabby F. Syed, Jose P. Kiyoshi, and Felipe Q. Atalig, through counsel Ramon K. Quichocho, accused Mobil Oil Mariana Islands Inc. (Mobil) and Mariana Acquisition Corp. (Shell) of false advertisement, unfair or deceptive business practices, and fraud.

Another businessman asked Ernest about the alleged illegal resale of beers bought from the Army and Air Force Exchange Store in Puerto Rico. This issue has been a concern in the CNMI and in the past, lawmakers asked for investigation into alleged underground operation to circumvent tax laws and take advantage of cheap prices.

Ernest told Chamber members and guests said such illegal activities of reselling military beers should be "curtailed," especially because the government loses some $16,000 in tax revenue for every container of these beers re-sold in the CNMI. Merchandises from the troop store are not supposed to be re-sold.

The consumer counsel said he also plans to investigate stores allowing the purchase of cigarettes and beers using food stamps, as well as probe auto shops allegedly recommending unnecessary parts purchases.

In his presentation, Ernest also said as far as he knows, the CNMI is the only U.S. jurisdiction that allows the selling of expired food, provided that these products are segregated, not sold as "new," marked as expired items, and are sold for half price, among other things.

In the end, if no consumer steps forward and report any alleged violations of consumer protection laws, then no investigation may be initiated by the OAG. For consumer complaints or information about consume protection laws, the public can reach the consumer counsel at 664-2333.

The Chamber also invited as guest speakers Police Officer Vicente Sablan and Eric Atalig, who made a brief presentation about the importance of the Neighborhood Watch Task Force to curb burglaries in the CNMI.

Sablan and Atalig urged Chamber members and guests to become block captains or leaders of the team in their own villages. Those who are interested are asked to call 664-2700, and should look for Frances Muña.

GOPS

From Page 1

The Republicans and the Covenants separately said the ballot voting helped tip the balance in favor of the Republicans, adding that had the voting been done through roll call, the Covenants would have had the delegation leadership. All 21 members of the delegation were present at the session.

"We thought we had the votes. We thought it would be 11-10 in our favor," Tenorio told *Saipan Tribune*.

Rep. Stanley Torres, an independent who aligned himself with the ruling Covenant Party in the 17th House of Representatives, confirmed with *Saipan Tribune* that he voted for Tebuteb.

"I voted for Tebuteb," he said in a phone interview.

But Torres said he was not the one who caused two ballots to be declared "spoiled" during the voting for vice chairman and floor leader.

The 21-member Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation has 10 Republicans, seven Covenants, three independents, and one Democrat. The three independents aligned themselves with the ruling Covenant Party in the CNMI House of Representatives.

The Covenants, according to Tenorio and Rep. Raymond Palacios (Cov-Saipan) supported Sen. Luis D. Crisostimo, the only Democrat in the delegation, for delegation chairmanship.

The delegation session came exactly a week after the Covenants and independents shunned the session called by Tebuteb, who was the former chair of the delegation during the 16th Legislature.

At the time, Tenorio said the majority should have been the one to call a session, and not Tebuteb.

The delegation controls the purse that directly appropriates money for Saipan and Northern Islands projects. Pork barrel bills are almost always contentious during delegation sessions.

Tebuteb, in a separate interview yesterday, said he had been reaching out to non-Republicans to ask them to consider him when they vote for a delegation chairman. He said he was ready to accept victory or defeat after the voting.

"The Republicans needed only one vote to get the majority of the votes, because we have 10 Republicans already. Now that the organizational session is over, we need to work together," said Tebuteb.

Tebuteb said the priorities will be health and tourism projects, besides the economy. He said the mayor's stray dog control project will be a priority, as it is important for health, safety and tourism.

House Minority Leader Rep. Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan) said he is "absolutely happy" about the results of the organizational session.

"We were not sure that we would have the votes. We had hoped that by having a ballot rather than have a voice votes, we will get enough votes for Tebuteb. It turned out we did. I was a little surprised. I felt there were some members who expressed support for Tebuteb but couldn't vote for him," he said.

Ballot voting

Crisostimo was appointed by the ruling Covenant Party as chairman pro tem during the delegation session until a chairman was elected.

House Vice Speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (Cov-Saipan) nominated Crisostimo for delegation chairman, while Rep. Francisco Dela Cruz (R-Saipan) nominated Tebuteb.

When the nominations were closed, Torres made a motion to hold the election by ballot. The members unanimously agreed to the motion, and a piece of paper was given to each of the 21 members to write the name of the candidate they're voting for.

House Clerk Evelyn Fleming, House Sergeant-at-Arms Peter Towai and legal counsel Antonette Villagomez gave out, collected, counted and read the ballots.

Tebuteb received 11 votes, while Crisostimo got 10 votes.

House Floor Leader George Camacho (Cov-Saipan) nominated Rep. Raymond Palacios (Cov-Saipan) as delegation vice chair, while Benavente nominated Rep. Joseph Palacios (R-Saipan).

When the ballots were counted, Joseph Palacios got 11 votes, while Raymond Palacios got nine votes.

One was declared "spoiled" ballot because it only stated "Rep. Palacios."

Tebuteb, Benavente, Raymond Palacios and Torres separately said they were surprised that even if lawmakers were specifically reminded to write the complete name of the candidate they're voting for because the two candidates have the same last name, one lawmaker still wrote "Rep. Palacios."

Raymond Palacios said now that the voting is over, he expects all delegation members to "work together."

Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan) nominated Ogumoro as delegation floor leader, while Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) nominated Sen. Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan).

When the ballots were counted, Reyes received 11 votes, while Ogumoro got 10 votes.

Again, there was one "spoiled" ballot, this time it stated, "Rep. Sen."

Tebuteb asked his colleagues to look into un-obligated funds and even obligated funds but whose projects have not taken off ground in their respective precincts, to see if they could be tapped for health and tourism projects.

The meeting adjourned around 12pm.

3 potential venues eyed for Flame Tree Arts Fest

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture has began preparing for the annual Flame Tree Arts Festival, now temporarily scheduled for the last week of April, and is eyeing three potential sites for the occasion.

Arts Council acting executive director Vince Rabauliman disclosed yesterday that the agency is looking at either the Susupe Civic Center, the Garapan Fishing Base, or the American Memorial Park as the official venue of the festivities, which will be the 29th edition this year.

The Park was the traditional festival venue before it was transferred to the Susupe Civic Center a few years ago.

Rabauliman is set to meet with AMP representatives today and, if things work out, the park would probably be the official site for this year's celebration.

Rabauliman said that problems with parking, dust, and the limited size of the Susupe Civic Center are some of the reasons why they are thinking of transferring the venue this year.

The Civic Center is the smallest of the three venues the council is considering.

The Flame Tree Arts Festival is Micronesia's largest annual arts and cultural celebration. It features visual, performing and culinary arts of numerous cultures, including indigenous Chamorro and Carolinians of the Northern Marianas and cultures of Micronesia, the Asia-Pacific region, and beyond.

Rabauliman said they are temporarily eyeing a three-day celebration this year.

The council met Tuesday to kick off preparations for the event and committees were formed, including the welcoming and hospitality committee, logistics, programs and publicities, invitation, and solicitation committee. Notices and letters pertaining to the celebration will be issued next week.

Despite the current economic slump, Rabauliman is optimistic that the island will once again witness the gathering of thousands of people, enjoying the festival offerings.

CCAC intends to add more highlights to this year's festival, including featured artists and food vendors.

Since the economy fell, the council has limited the number of delegates from off-island to minimize expenditures. The government shoulders the accommodation and food of these guests each year.

The budget for the event and other preparations, including the festival theme, have yet to be finalized.

Last year, the festival featured 20 food booths and 60 booths for artists and nonprofit organizations. The theme was "Uniting Rainbows of Culture and Tradition."

DFS employee allegedly stole $16,000 from company vault

Police arrested Wednesday night in Kagman a Duty Free Shoppers employee who allegedly stole about $16,000 from a DFS vault.

Melanie Camacho, 41, was served with an arrest warrant for theft.

In the warrant, Superior Court associate judge Ramona V. Manglona imposed a $10,000 cash bail for Camacho's temporary liberty.

Camacho was set to appear for her initial court appearance yesterday afternoon.

Detective Buddy Igitol stated in his report that Camacho provided the DFS general manager with a statement confessing to stealing money from the vault.

Igitol said that Camacho admitted how she did it, how often, and an estimation of how much she took.

Igitol said a police officer was dispatched to DFS to investigate the case. The officer learned from the DFS security manager that on Jan. 31, 2010, employees counted the vault's backup change, which supposedly amounted to $16,710 cash. The employees discovered that the funds were short of $16,000 and only $710 was left.

Igitol said that on Tuesday he met with the general manager, who had found out it was Camacho who was responsible for the missing money.

Igitol learned that the general manager and the finance manager visited Camacho's house in Kagman III last Sunday and that the defendant confessed to stealing about $11,000.

The detective said Camacho went to DFS the following day and gave her written confession. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

ABE ORIENTATION NMC
Keynote speaker Ian Carr addresses a crowd of over 50 students during the Adult Basic Education program's orientation held Monday at the Northern Marianas College Student Center. Carr, a graduate of the program, is currently pursuing his associate's degree in liberal arts at NMC.

Five courses offered for OFWs

The Philippine Consulate General, through its Philippine Overseas Labor Office, announced yesterday the opening of registration for five courses that will be offered to overseas Filipino workers in the first quarter of this year.

The five courses are:

■ Basic English Language Development Course (10 Sessions). It will be held every Saturday, 2pm to 5pm, from Feb. 20 to April 24.

■ Basic Computer Operation 2 (8 Sessions). It will be held every Saturday, from 6pm to 9pm, from Feb. 20 to April 10.

■ Home Décor + Sewing (8 Sessions). It will be held every Sunday, 9am to 12pm, from Feb. 21 to April 11.

■ Basic Nihongo (8 Sessions). It will be held every Sunday, 2:30pm to 5:30pm, from Feb. 21 to April 11.

■ Intermediate English (8 Sessions). No specific schedule yet. It will be held either Saturdays or Sundays in March.

Registration starts on Monday, Feb. 8, 2010, until Feb. 19, 2010. Slots shall be on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants are requested to bring their umbrella permit or work entry permit and passport.

For inquiries, visit the POLO at the ground floor of Marianas Business Plaza or call telephone nos. 235-3411 or 235-6992. ***(POLO)***

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Fund's hedge fund money manager 'underperforming'

'Board of trustees may get rid of its service'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund may get rid of the services of its hedge fund money manager in the wake of a study that shows it has been underperforming, according to Fund Administrator Mark A. Aguon.

Aguon

"Preliminary indication shows that we may have to get rid of our hedge fund manager…and I can't get into the specifics because the consultant hasn't done its review yet," he told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Saipan Tribune learned that JP Morgan is the Fund's hedge fund money manager.

"They lose money and it indicates a negative performance," Aguon said.

Because JP Morgan is managing hedge funds, there is no set benchmark for them. To assess its performance, the Fund pegs against Standard and Poor's 500, a leading index of large-cap American stocks.

"We compare their performance to the SMP 500 and, even they make money if they still underperform the benchmark, they will be in trouble…that's how we assess their performance," Aguon explained.

He disclosed that, based on the initial result of the study, the Fund needs to realign some of its assets. The Fund's investment portfolio is spread out among common stocks, which accounts for 65 percent; fixed income, 27 percent; hedge funds, 6 percent; and money market, 2 percent.

"It's up to the board because a final decision on any asset allocation rests with the board of trustees," Aguon said.

The Fund's consultants are still finalizing its assets liability modeling—an analysis about the Fund's projected actuarial liability versus actual portfolio and a projection of the Fund's assets through 2028.

The actuarial liability study was completed by the Fund's actuarial consultant while Merrill Lynch is completing the assets liability part. A final draft of the assets liability modeling is expected between four to six weeks after being received by the consultants. They received it last week, according to Aguon.

He said the assets liability modeling is now with the consultant for review and a final copy will be issued after it renders its assessment.

Aguon disclosed that the Fund has a total of 11 money managers at present. He said the study will reveal if there's a need to cut or add to the number.

"If the study comes out and says we need to diversify more, then we will add more [money managers]. If it says we're overdiversified, we need to get rid of some…it all depends on what the study says," he said.

During its last regular meeting, the Fund's board of trustees indicated that "losing money is not an option" for the Fund.

4 grandchildren of late vice speaker sue for share of Hillblom settlement

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The grandchildren of the late Vice Speaker Jesus P. Mafnas Sr. have sued their former lawyers after they allegedly failed to get any share of the $1.9 million settlement in a previous lawsuit against the estate of the late business tycoon Larry Lee Hillblom.

Jess Mafnas, Franklin Mafnas, Britney Mafnas, and Blas Mafnas Jr. sued Guam attorney Peter C. Perez, the Hawaii-based law firm of Cronin, Friend, Sekiya, Kekina, and Fairbanks, and Hawaii attorney Allen K. Williams.

The plaintiffs, through counsels William R. Satterberg Jr. and Matthew T. Gregory, asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to pay each complainant in excess of $375,000 in damages.

Jesus Mafnas Sr. was killed in 1995 in a crash while riding on an aircraft piloted by Hillblom. The then minor plaintiffs filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the Hillblom estate in 1995.

Perez, Williams, and the Cronin law firm acted as counsels for Jesus Mafnas Sr.'s then minor grandchildren, the wife of the then vice speaker, and his children.

In that lawsuit, the grandchildren claimed suffering loss of economic support as a result of the death of their grandfather.

Satterberg and Gregory said that on behalf of the minor grandchildren plaintiffs, the defendant attorneys negotiated a $1.75 million settlement with the Hillblom estate.

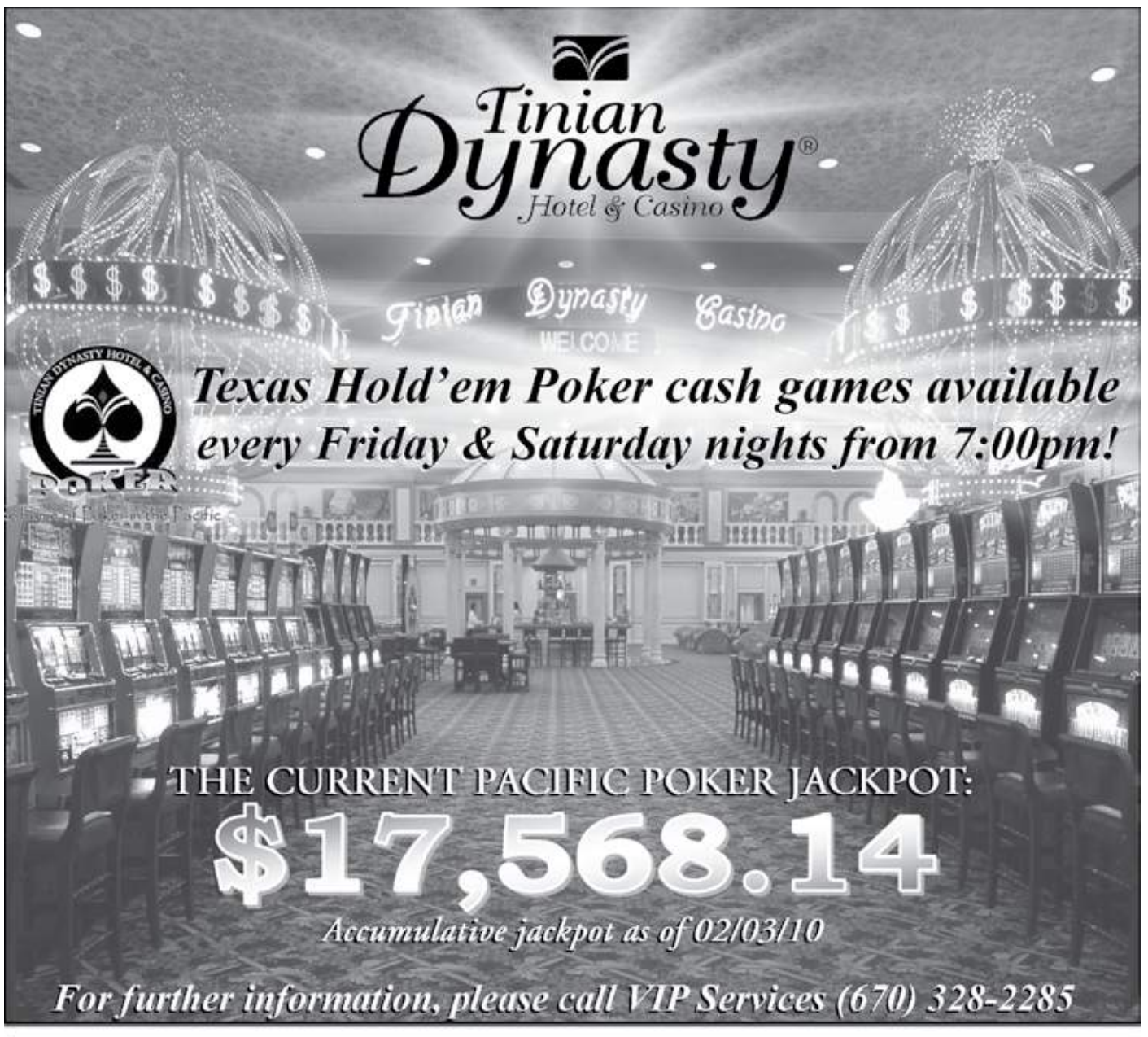
"During the negotiation of settlement in the Hillblom estate case…representations were made to the court…that the minor grandchildren plaintiffs had suffered compensable losses due to the loss of their grandfather, Jesus Mafnas Sr., and that, upon settlement, the minor grandchildren plaintiffs would be compensated for their economic losses," Satterberg and Gregory said in the lawsuit filed on Tuesday.

Despite this, when distribution of the funds was made in 1998, no funds were distributed to the minor grandchildren, they said.

"As such, the attorneys specifically breached their duties to the minor grandchildren in failing to properly represent the minor grandchildren in the distribution of the settlement funds," Satterberg and Gregory said.

Hillblom was co-founder of DHL Worldwide Express. He moved to Saipan in the 1980s. His plane went down on May 21, 1995, on a flight from Pagan to Saipan. The bodies of the pilot and fellow passenger Jesus Mafnas Sr. were found, but Hillblom's body was never recovered.

That same year, the name of the legislative building on Capital Hill was renamed "Vice Speaker Jesus P. Mafnas Memorial Building" in honor and memory of the late vice speaker.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PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP10-CHC-054

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 25, 2010 • TIME: 3:00 P.M.

"LEASE OF OUTPATIENT CLINIC FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO **MR. PETE T. UNTALAN, MHA ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION** BY FAX TO: (670) 234-8930 OR E-MAILED TO health1@pticom.com NO LATER THAN **FEBRUARY 16, 2010 CLOSE TO BUSINESS.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

Kilili wants NMI in 'Race to Top' program

WASHINGTON, D.C.—President Obama Fiscal Year 2011 budget, released on Monday, includes $1.35 billion to continue the "Race to the Top" education initiative, and U.S. Rep. Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) wants to be sure the Northern Marianas will be eligible to compete for these education funds.

Sablan took the lead in writing to the President and Education Secretary Arne Duncan last month on behalf of all the U.S. territories to press for access to the programs and the expected new money.

"Race to the Top is a program included in last year's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Territories were not eligible because our education funds came through a separate stream of money," explains Sablan.

"Now that the President is proposing to extend Race to the Top and make it a multi-year program, though, the Northern Mariana Islands needs to be included. Because the Recovery Act education funds we received were just a one-time appropriation."

The Northern Mariana Islands Public School System was granted $36.4 million from the Recovery Act's State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. The first $28.4 million was awarded in October and PSS is currently using the money to pay teachers, renovate classrooms to make them more energy efficient, and fill other needs not covered by local funding.

Sablan has worked closely with PSS officials to maximize the amount of Recovery Act money that goes to education in the Marianas and to make sure the money gets used as quickly as possible.

To date, the Northern Marianas is the only U.S. territory that has received any of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund money. ***(PR)***

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COMMONWEALTH ZONING BOARD

DEADLINE EXTENSION TO THE REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

To Participate in Zoning Office's Island-Wide Junk Car Removal & Recycling Program

The Zoning Office has extended the deadline to receive Expressions of Interest for the removal of junk vehicles by qualified towing and recycling operations. Responding companies must be willing to pick up any and all junk vehicles identified and processed by the Zoning Office at no charge to the CNMI government. It is estimated that there are as many as 18,000 junk vehicles on the island of Saipan.

All companies wishing to register for this program must have a valid recycling permit from the CNMI Division of Environmental Quality.

Please include in your Expression of Interest a description of your firm's operations, permits and number of vehicles that can be taken per month. Interested companies need to be willing to take large and small vehicles in any condition.

The Zoning Office will take every qualified company that submits an Expression of Interest, but reserves the right not to select any of the responding companies for the program. The Zoning Office will publish the approved list of the selected company or companies and advise the public of the start of the program. The Zoning Office will provide an equal number of vehicles to each approved company on a rotating schedule to be determined.

Submissions should be clearly marked "Expression of Interest – Junk Car Removal"

Format of submission

- On 8 1/2" x 11" on company letterhead
- One electronic file version in PDF, MS Word or MS PowerPoint format, by email to staff@zoning.gov.mp (use subject line: "Junk Vehicle Program")

Where and when to submit and questions
Address your questions, the Expression of Interest and other correspondence to:

Hand Delivery: Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan
US Mail: Zoning Office, Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950
E-mail: staff@zoning.gov.mp

Attn: Junk Vehicle Program.

Proposals must be received at the Zoning Office by 3:00 pm, Friday, February 19th , 2010.

/s/ Herminia M. Fusco, Chair

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
San Vicente School
Community Based Management, Inc.
RFP- 002

The San Vicente School Community Based Management, Inc., Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), is soliciting competitive Proposals from qualified A/E firms for the design and construction management of the Objective Work Plan for the design, installation and construction management for the tasks listed below. Through this Request for Proposals the governing board of the San Vicente School Community Based Management Inc., will select one A/E firm for performing the tasks listed below. The selected team (firm) must present have the capability to design the main elements of the project and follow through with the total construction of the project. The selected firm must demonstrate the capability to design the main elements of the Plan, present estimated costs, and follow through with the total construction management of the project to the point of turn over a working system. The Proposal Plan shall include the following tasks:

A. Provide site inspection and a load study prior to providing a schematic design for the installation of a solar power system that will meet the power demands of the aquaculture science center and office. These facilities are located on the grounds of the San Vicente Elementary School, San Vicente, Saipan, MP.
B. The scope of work lists several requirements that need to be met with the proposed solar system design. These include net metering, a possible back-up generator, and power monitoring for educational purposes. A time frame for work completion is also included.
C. The Proposal shall be all inclusive including meeting the requirements of the various permitting agencies such as the CUC, DPW, DEQ, and Zoning.
D. Inspect and renovate as necessary the existing solar panels and add additional panels as necessary to meet the on site power requirements for the new system. Prepare the plans and specifications and provide certification by a licensed engineer/architect.
E. The project will be a design-build project and each step in the process will require review and approval by the Project Manager. Clear milestones in the project progress shall be addressed in the Proposal.
F. During construction provide inspection, any design modifications and oversee the work as necessary to provide for a complete working photovoltaic system. An additive project may be the provision for a wind generation system at a separate location.
G. Selection of the most qualified, responsible and responsive firm shall be based on the following critical criteria.

1. Qualifications and resumes for the personnel to be assigned to the project 50%
2. Cost to provide the required services 25%
3. Prior experience with this type of project and in-house ability to prepare the design 15%
4. The team's present work load and availability, including references with similar projects 10%

The Proposer must demonstrate in their Proposal successful experience on similar A/E construction management work within the CNMI.

A mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference and site inspection will be held for this project on Monday, February 8th, 2010 at 10:00 am at the Aquaculture science center on the SVES campus. All questions related to the proposed project must be submitted in writing to the Project Manager, Mr. Valrick Welch, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, February 15th, 2010 by sending written inquiries to email vawelch@gmail.com. Questions and responses will be provided to each respondent via email.

Copies of the scope of work and drawings can be picked-up at Quick Print located on middle road, Garapan.

Based on the evaluation of the critical elements A. through G.. presented above, the Evaluation Team will notify the top three (3) firms and request a final competitive cost from the top team. Discussions will include in-depth evaluation of the team's technical expertise, availability to perform the work in a timely manner, available personnel, in-house capability, performance on similar contracts, including the timeliness of the firm in meeting contract deadlines, and the ability to prepare the design on AutoCAD latest version with a copy of the complete design diskettes for the school archives. In the event a mutually beneficial contract arrangement cannot be met within 30 days the Project Manager will proceed to negotiate with the firm having the second highest competitive ranking, and so on. Five (5) copies plus one original of the sealed Proposals must be submitted to the San Vicente Elementary School secretary in the main office and must be labeled as follows:

Valrick A. Welch, Project Manager
San Vicente School Community Based Management, Inc.
Science Center alternative power RFP-002

no later than 3:00 PM, local CNMI time, on Friday, February 19, 2010. The San Vicente School reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any imperfections in any proposal if to do so shall be in the best interests of the CNMI. All Proposals shall become the exclusive property of the San Vicente School Community Based Management.

/s/ Juan Sablan
Executive Director

OAG aims to keep victims well-informed

The Office of the Attorney General has issued a directive to ensure that its obligations pursuant to the victim's rights statute are adequately met.

In a directive issued to Chief Prosecutor Rosemond B. Santos and the assistant attorneys, Attorney General Edward T. Buckingham stressed the importance of properly notifying victims of all decisions regarding their respective cases by a signed acknowledgment from the Victim's Advocate Office.

"Every plea agreement, dismissal or decision to decline to prosecute is to include on the signature page a line below the appropriate assistant attorney general's name a Victim's Advocate line to confirm the date of victim notification," said Buckingham.

"These steps follow some recent cases where the AGO hadn't met its burden to keep victims informed. The directive was issued not only to meet the statutory requirements but to also "do what is right" Buckingham added.

To further ensure that victims are properly notified of a plea agreement, the Attorney General further directs that no plea agreement shall be forwarded to a defense counsel without the proper signatory from the Victim's Advocate Office. This process is intended to include victims in the decision making process.

"Victims and prosecutors may not always agree. But we have an obligation to keep them informed and to respectfully listen to their concerns," Buckingham said.

At the same time, the AG established the necessary protocol following the filing of charges and arraignments as well as upcoming Court dates, hearing types and status of bonds. With such procedures in place, the AGO seeks to establish a more efficient system of tracking information and updates. ***(OAG)***

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2010

Appreciation for a parent: Francis Taimanao

By JALAYNE BENAVENTE
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

As a part of Catholic Schools Week-Dividends for Life, we recognize a parent who has demonstrated excellence in representing the school, its purpose, and its students. Catholic Schools Week 2010 features our Parent-Teacher Organization president, Francis Taimanao.

Aside from being the school's PTO president, Taimanao works for the Department of Public Safety – Highway Safety Office. Taimanao is the father of four children. His wife, Frances Taimanao, is currently the 6th grade teacher here at Mount Carmel School.

When Taimanao was asked why he accepted the nomination as PTO president he answered by saying, "Accepting the nomination as president was based on my belief that the education of our children is of paramount importance. My acceptance was also driven by the thought of how we as parents can contribute to the success of student learning and advancement."

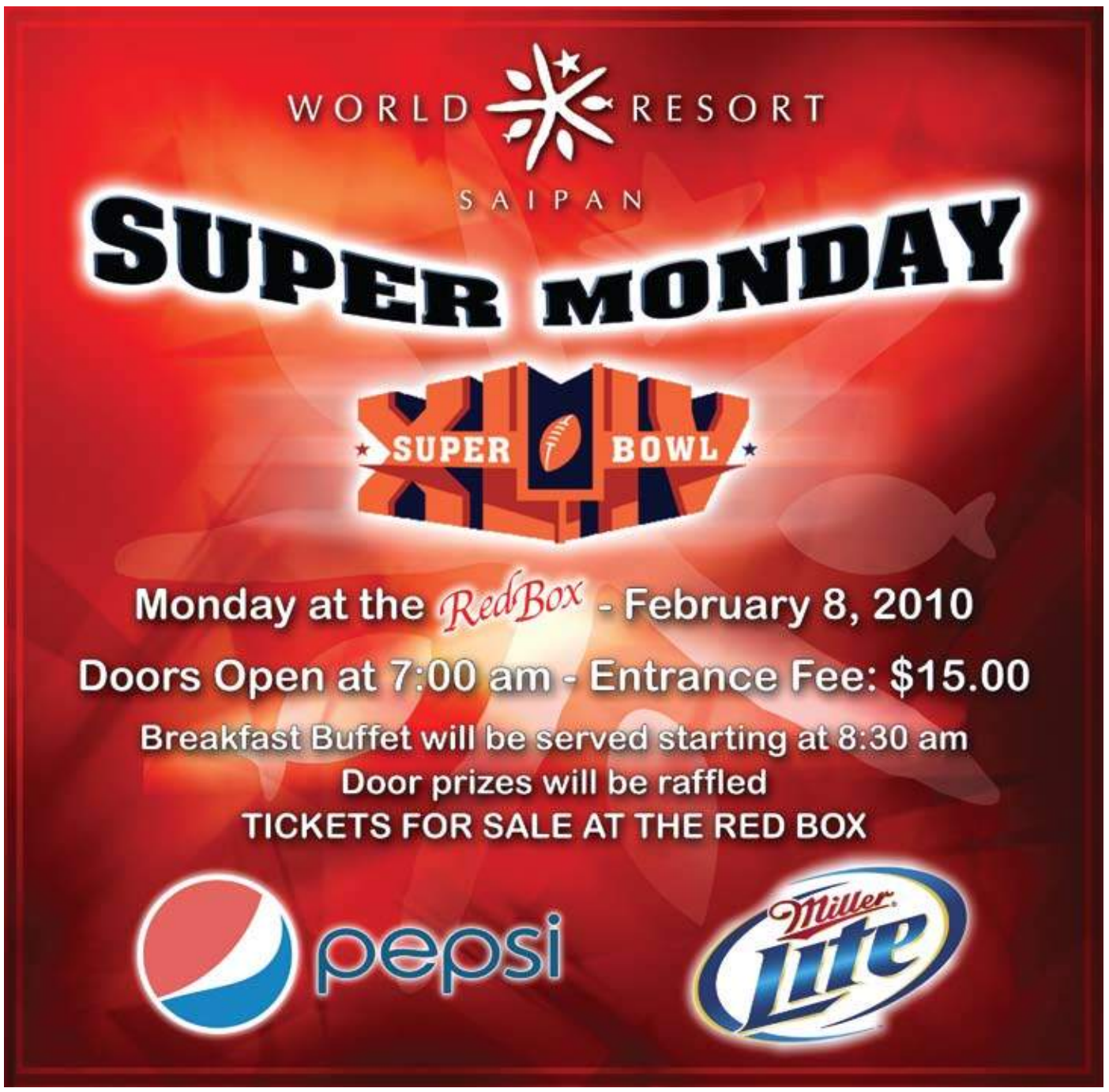
When asked what his thought was the essence of the school, he answered, "I believe the essence of the school derives from the values and faith of the students, teachers and parents all working together."

Taimanao also shared that the value of Catholic education is the ability to integrate academic curriculum to achieve educational standards, and in the same token, strengthen our Catholic belief in God among our students.

Taimanao

Lastly, when asked what were his thoughts on the theme, "Catholic Schools Week-Dividends for Life" he answered by saying, "My thoughts on the theme refers us to the basics. In my own words, it is more of a reward for personally achieving your individual goals in Life."

Taimanao is a great role model for our students and for the rest of our school community, and Mount Carmel School is forever grateful for his services.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Flashback
A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Feb. 4, 1999

Permanent residency eyed to deal with labor shortage

Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Kerry M. Deets yesterday proposed the drafting of a legislation that will grant permanent residency status to guest workers so that they can find jobs in the CNMI without any restrictions. This was one of the possible solutions recommended by Deets during the Chamber's meeting in a move to help the Northern Marianas find solutions to its labor and immigration problems. During the meeting, she urged the membership to come up with suggestions on how they can help the CNMI government stave off federalization of labor and immigration policies.

McPhetres questions NMC budget cut

The House committee on Health, Education and Welfare yesterday resumed its oversight hearing on the financially-troubled Northern Marianas College, investigating into management and personnel policies as well as its autonomous functions as mandated under the laws. The panel, chaired by Rep. Heinz Hofschneider, noted inconsistencies in the college policies as it asked NMC officials to hand over several documents, including salary structure of employees and an opinion from its former legal counsel clarifying its status as autonomous government agency. Among these included spending authority on donations to the college, conversion of "short-term" employees to full time without advertising the position, a multi-scale pay plan and disbursement of revenues from tuition and fees.

Feb. 4, 2000

Senate scraps $100K security deposit

Consistent with their new commitment to help revitalize the local economy, the Senate yesterday set in motion the plan to ease the $100,000 security deposit imposed on foreign investments—a requirement that business leaders insist scare away potential investors. In their first regular session under the 12th Legislature held on Tinian, senators voted unanimously to amend provisions of Foreign Investment Act to provide leeway to investors in meeting such requirement, other than a cash deposit. Yesterday's approval of the proposal followed a two-year effort by the legislative branch to scrap the cash requirement. Although passed by the 11th House of Representatives, the initial bill died down in the Senate due to lack of support.

CDA fails to meet 1,000 home loan deals

Slowdown in economic activities and banking institution's conservative attitude toward giving out advances due to Article 12 restrictions forced the Commonwealth Development Authority to lower by 40 percent the number of home loan agreements it projected to close by end-December 1999. CDA Board Chair John S. Tenorio said the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation managed to close only 600 home loan agreements by end of last year, short from the original target of 1,000 housing loan packages. "We were targeting to close 1,000 home loan agreements by year 2000 but due to financial difficulties and external market forces, we fell short by 400 from our target," Mr. Tenorio said.

Feb. 4, 2002

Saipan senators rush to protect poker fees

Although he is willing to work with the Babauta administration on some of its agenda, Sen. Thomas P. Villagomez said he would oppose any moves to compromise the local collections arising from the poker license fees. To boost this position, Villagomez said all three senators of the Saipan senatorial district—Pete P. Reyes, Ramon S. Guerrero and himself—have come out with a statement, saying that they are not ready to support any moves by the administration to tap into the local poker machine collections. This is in reaction to a proposal outlined in the CNMI Fiscal Outlook Report prepared by the Office of the Governor, which suggests that the amusement machine fees earmarked for the Saipan and Rota senatorial districts be transferred to the General Fund.

DEQ boat capsizes near Mañagaha

Rescuers responded to a sea crisis Thursday east of Mañagaha, where a 21-foot Division of Environmental Quality boat had capsized. There were no reported injuries. All individuals aboard the vessel were transported safely to land. The police department's Boating Safety Unit later on recovered the capsized vessel. Acting police spokesperson Lt. Pete C. Muña reported Friday that five DEQ and Coastal Resources Management personnel departed from the Smiling Cove Marina last Thursday to conduct a marine monitoring by Mañagaha.

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For more information, visit the Department of Public Health's H1N1 Preparedness Website at http://h1n1dph.gov.mp .

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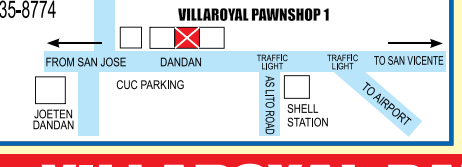

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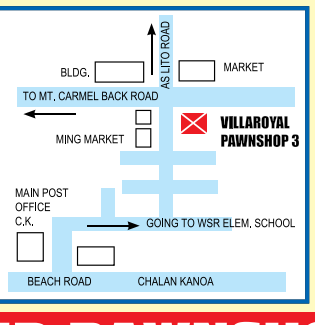

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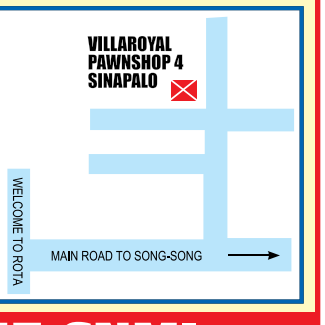

VILLAROYAL PAWNSHOP HAS NO AFFILIATED PAWNSHOP IN THE CNMI.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XX, Issue No. 29

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MEMBER
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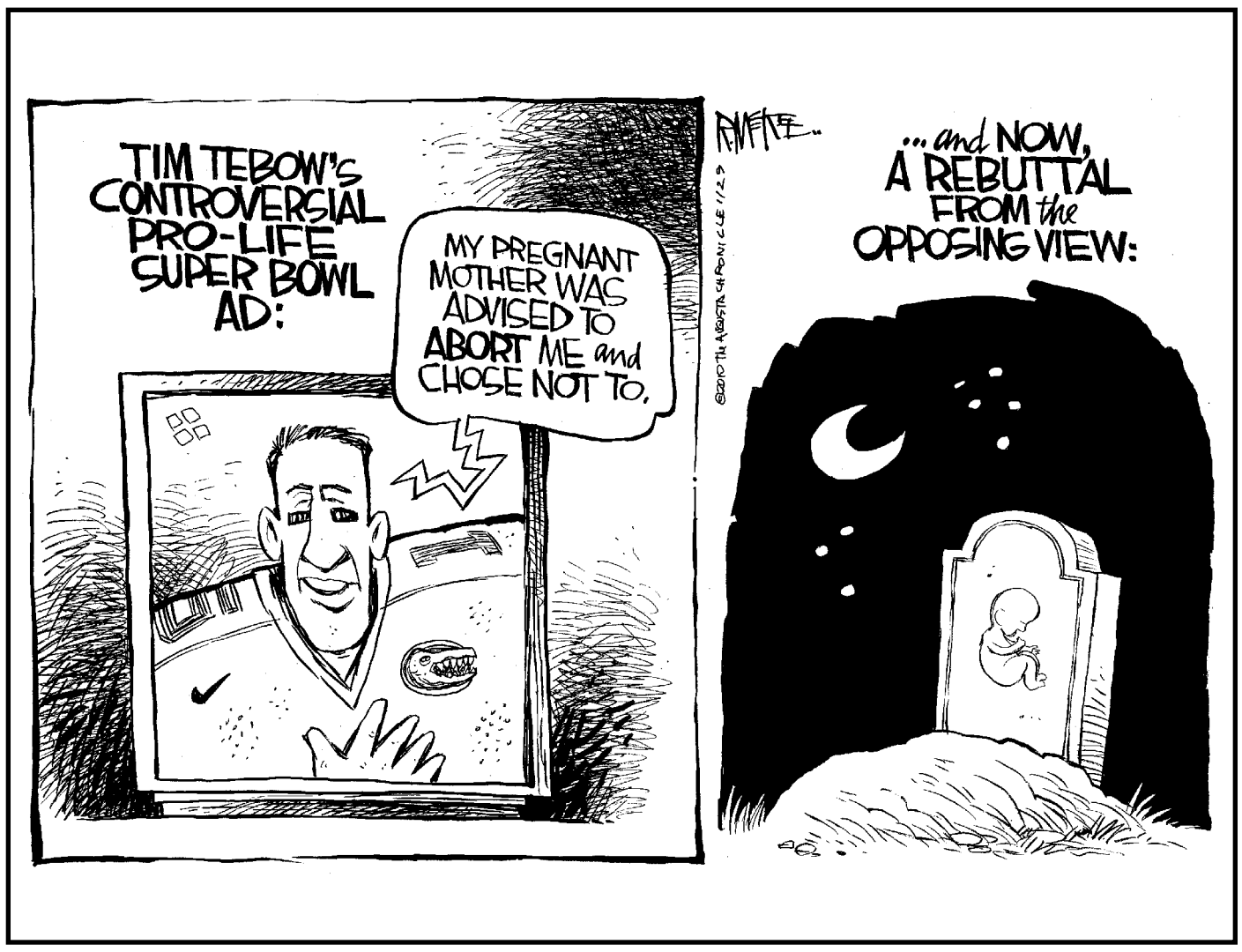
TIM TEBOW'S CONTROVERSIAL PRO-LIFE SUPER BOWL AD:
MY PREGNANT MOTHER WAS ADVISED TO ABORT ME and CHOSE NOT TO.
©2010 TIM ANSTETT SAIPAN CLE 1/29
... and NOW, A REBUTTAL FROM the OPPOSING VIEW:

EDITORIAL

Who's watching these guys?

The case of an American-born jihadist raises disturbing questions about why terrorism suspects are allowed to buy guns in the United States.

Abdulhakim Muhammad of Memphis freely admits that he shot a U.S. soldier to death and wounded another last summer at an Army recruiting center in Arkansas. He opened fire on the soldiers because, he said, the U.S. military is waging war against innocent Muslims around the world.

At the time of his arrest, Muhammad was armed with two pistols, a military-style assault rifle, and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. He allegedly told police he intended to kill as many Army personnel as possible.

Investigators learned that Muhammad, a recent convert to Islam, had searched on Google Maps for possible sites in Philadelphia to carry out his attack. He considered Jewish institutions and a day-care center.

Several months before the shooting, Muhammad had come to the attention of federal authorities. The FBI's Joint Terrorist Task Force had been investigating Muhammad since he returned to the United States from a trip to Yemen in 2008.

Radical Muslims in Yemen are believed to have given support or encouragement to the so-called underwear bomber, who tried to destroy a U.S. airliner on Christmas Day, and to the suspect in the shooting deaths of 13 people last November at Fort Hood, Texas. Muhammad has since claimed affiliation with a branch of al-Qaeda based in Yemen.

It's not clear whether Muhammad was on the FBI's Terrorist Watch List, which contains information about individuals suspected of planning or engaging in terrorist activities. But even if Muhammad's name had been on the list, it wouldn't necessarily have prevented him from purchasing guns and ammo legally.

Current federal law does not prohibit people who are on the Terrorist Watch List from purchasing firearms or explosives.

The Congressional Research Service found that from February 2004 to February 2009, 963 people on the Watch List tried to buy guns from licensed dealers. Of those, 865 individuals were allowed to buy firearms because background checks revealed "no prohibiting information."

Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., has introduced legislation that would close this obvious loophole. The measure would enable the U.S. attorney general to deny the sale of firearms or explosives if there's reason to believe they may be used for terrorism.

This legislation should be a slam dunk. With a rise in the number of U.S.-born terrorist wannabes, federal authorities need this tool to help prevent more potential attacks.

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Beijing's winter wunderland

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune*'s Opinion Section.*

The inaugural flight from Beijing to Saipan was well patronized; the turn around trip less so. There were but 14 passengers; upon boarding, most of the staff were settled in the business class cabin ready "to morning the night away." The rest of us had the option to choose five seats in the main cabin where we can stretch our legs in comfort and slumber toward China's capital city.

Two *karaoke* girls who had seen me at a lawyer's office on Saipan were surprised to see a non-Chinese on board. The ladies, a 10-year vet with first, the garment industry, and her friend who barely handles rudimentary *Chinglish,* conned four months before to come and get a green card that Uncle Same was purportedly going to pass out after Nov. 28 on Saipan, were friendly though disappointment over failed personal investment was deep.

Ever the pedagogue, I used an iterative process to facilitate a smooth conversation, beginning at the objective level that deals with sensory experience (five senses), then moving on to emotive responses (preferences and displeasures), proceeding to articulation of meaning and significance (analysis and cognition), and then capping the exchange with a recount of decisions made (results and imperatives).

Three words/phrase that kept getting repeated summed their Saipan sojourn for me. *Paisando* anchored their delights, *babalatong* characterized their confidence, or lack thereof, on anything related to Chamorro Labor (translate, government bureaucracy, like "I go Labor" also referred to visits to the traffic bureau and the tax office!), and Filipino sweet talking dudes, and *lang ya* focused their despair and disdain for events that did not conform to expectations.

Paisando were gallivanting times with friends and acquaintances, a pleasant social luxury that these ladies gleefully discovered given their usual regimen of work-work-work. *Babalatong* expressed wise skepticism over promises of economic benefit, romantic bliss, and *man'amko* Mile-High offers! *Lang ya* expressed disdain. I was tempted to ask if it included saying, *Lang, yah* in reference to the HS' rather rough HR treatment of Glenna Palacios, and his sophomoric boycott of the Saipan/Northern Is. delegation organizational meeting, but I am sure all that would have been way over their heads.

Something about this Capital City, at least, from the looks of its exterior, has the feel more of a European city than a hub of Asian pagodas and whooping cranes. The pagodas, of course, have become tourist traps; towering construction cranes have replaced the long-legged birds of yore! Beijing's skyline is crisp this Friday morning, and though its apartments and condominiums follow a standard pattern, it is not uniformly boring. *Feng Sui,* the rite of sacral space prescribes an aesthetic of its own, quite foreign from western utilitarianism. In this cold winter morning, the air is clear as well, absent the smog that I associated with this city in the past.

My first sighting of this city was five months after the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989. It was then still a city of bicycles eight street lanes wide, with verdant arching trees shading side streets, and the single storey dwellings in narrow streets called *hutongs* still standard across the city. There was one circumferential road, and a rapid transit system was still in Deng Xiao Peng's drawing board!

Twenty years later, all of that has dramatically changed. Bikers still bike but gas guzzlers now dominate the traffic lanes. The subway system takes one anywhere now; the city is working on its sixth beltway! This Asian hub is living up to its name! A snowstorm swept through the city early this month and instead of getting paralyzed by this infrequent phenomenon, the city turned its Olympic park into a virtual winter wonderland, complete with ski slopes and skating rinks. The news is reporting at the moment the US Midwest getting battered by a snowstorm.

I am billeted in the southeast quadrant of the city, south of the Beijing Railway Station. At first, my host got me into a local hotel at local price with local amenities, but the front desk discovered that I did not have a national ID card so I had to move to another establishment that took in foreigners. At $16 per night, I got WiFi and TV, one hour of hot water in the evening and another in the morning. This is evidently a low-income business person's accommodation with no frills.

Along Xinfu Dajie, at the confluence of Piexin and Dongbi streets, are *hutongs* with a public market signage declaring a Vegetable Center. It is a typical Asian market with dry goods, fresh, preserved and dried meats, fish, vegetables and fruits. It was the abundance of fresh fruits and vegetable that caught my fancy—longgan and strawberries, oranges and apples, pears and assorted nuts. Down two blocks were Carrefour and Gome, the superstores that have the same things in more antiseptic settings and at middle class prices, and the ubiquitous *Mai Dong Lao* (McDonald) that serves *Ham bao bao* (hamburger). The old and the new astride along together!

BMWs and Benzes are common sights along the streets, and parking a perennial need. But Xinfu St. at pre-lunar New Year nights is lit up by tiny crystal bulbs that twinkle with the icicles, giving a different meaning to *krystalnacht.* With the *won ton* noodle soup shop down the street offering 11.5 percent spirited 750 ml local beer, I sure am glad to have been one of the 14 on the inaugural flight to Beijing. I might even get used to the place!

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Impossible possibilities

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC. They can be contacted at biz_results@yahoo.com.

In my college classes this semester, I asked students to introduce themselves and tell everyone what makes them unique or tell us something they've done that no one in the class has accomplished. I mentioned that I had flown directly over the North Pole, which was a safe bet that no one else in the class had ever done. I was surprised that one other person had accomplished my feat of learning to ride a bicycle backwards. I was delighted to learn some interesting things about my students, but I was also disappointed that many of them felt that they were ordinary, were not unique in any way, or have not done anything noteworthy.

Many times, we are our own worst critic and the biggest limitation to achieve great things. There are numerous examples of people who are labeled with a dis-ability, but go on to accomplish something that seems nearly impossible to others. Even the word "impossible" can be arranged to spell "i'm possible." You can even redefine impossible from "something that cannot be achieved" to "something which has not been achieved, yet!"

When you believe that something is impossible, you make a personal resolution that there is a limit and won't even try to break the barrier. In 1954, Roger Bannister made the impossible possible by running one mile in less than four minutes. Many doctors and scientist thought a human was incapable of breaking the four-minute barrier, and a person would die in the attempt. Today, almost 1,000 individuals have achieved the once impossible feat.

In our lifetime, we have seen many "miracles" happen because someone made the impossible possible. Visionaries such as Leonardo da Vinci recorded many of his impossible inventions that are now commonplace. He's also an example of a person who had multiple talents and became excellent at whatever he set his mind to accomplish.

There are four things required to make the impossible possible in your life: you must have awareness or knowledge about how to do something; you need to have the resources required to do it; the environment must allow you to do what needs to be done; and most importantly, you must be willing to take consistent action to make something happen.

If you don't meet these four prerequisites, then it may be impossible for you to accomplish your goals. This doesn't mean that you will never do them; it just means that you currently do not have the capability to get it done. You have to be willing to make the sacrifice and apply consistent action to eventually realize your goal.

As a personal example, I loathe doing pull-ups, and often avoid them when I workout. However, a few weeks ago I was sitting in the waiting room of a doctor's office and read a short article about a woman who had practiced law for 10 years and then decided to become a full-time fitness model and competitor. Crystal West spends a lot of time in the gym, and two years ago she felt she needed a new challenge, so she started doing pull-ups. At first she could only do two wide grip pull-ups, so she vowed to keep working on it until she can now perform 1,210 mixed grip pull-ups in 80 minutes. The 44-year old recently set a world record in the women's open division for added weight pull-ups by doing one pull-up with 75 pounds of weight strapped to her, and she's planning to break a lot more records this year.

What was once a dreaded physical exercise has now become my passion and I've set a goal to do 54 pull-ups before I turn 54 in November. I started with 6 wide grip pull-ups a month ago and have been doing them consistently until I can now do 12—only 42 left to go.

There are also abundant examples of impossible possibilities in business and non-profit organizations. President Obama is a great of example of someone who accomplished what others thought would be impossible a few decades ago. We have made progress in many areas of science and inventions, and it is increasing at an exponential rate. If just a few more people living in the CNMI can adopt the attitude of possibility thinking, it may spread to others until we begin to turn ourselves, our businesses, and the economy around.

What would you do if you believed it was possible to accomplish something that is important to you? How would you live if the limitations imposed by yourself, your friends, or your culture were lifted and you had the attitude that anything is possible? How would you feel if you could boldly say: "I'm possible and a miracle in the making!"

What Obama didn't say in his State of the Union address

By JACKSON DIEHL
(c) 2010, The Washington Post

Sometimes a president sends a message by what he doesn't say. Some in the Middle East have concluded that President Barack Obama did just that in his State of the Union speech last week—in which he failed to mention Israel, the Palestinians or the Middle East peace process, which was one of his most high-profile diplomatic initiatives during his first year.

The omission sent Israeli officials scrambling to the archives of past State of the Union speeches. Their conclusion: Obama's address, though one of the longest State of the Union speeches, was the first not to mention Israel in at least eight years. (I looked back further: Bill Clinton didn't mention Israel in 1998.) Some also noted that in remarks about countries that were providing humanitarian aid in Haiti two weeks ago, Obama also omitted Israel—though its emergency team was one of the first to arrive. "He must be very angry at us," said one official I spoke to.

In fact, Obama defended Israel to a critical questioner at a Tampa town hall meeting the day after the State of the Union. But for those reading tea leaves—and there are many in the Middle East—the president has offered a few signs recently that Israeli-Palestinian negotiations have moved down his list of priorities. In an interview with Time's Joe Klein this month, he conceded that the administration "overestimated our ability" to advance talks at a time when the domestic politics of both Israel and the Palestinians "ran contrary to that." In Tampa on Thursday, he said something similar.

What does this all mean for former Sen. George Mitchell, whom Obama appointed with great fanfare to head his Middle East diplomacy effort immediately after his inauguration last year? Mitchell recently said that he still believed he could get the Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiating table, along with the Syrians and Lebanese, and broker a comprehensive peace agreement within two years.

If Obama's words—or lack of them—last week are any indication, the president has his doubts about that goal. If so, I agree with him. As I argued in a column this month, the history of Israeli-Arab diplomacy clearly shows that only peace efforts that originate with the parties themselves have succeeded.

Or, as former Secretary of State James A. Baker III once put it, we "can't want peace more than the parties" themselves. Baker, a master of Middle East diplomacy, once publicly gave Israelis and Palestinians the White House phone number and invited them to call when they were serious about pursuing negotiations. In a more subtle way, Obama may be doing the same thing.

Letter to the Editor

Humbug, indeed!

Yes, Mr. Anderson, I do have spinal stenosis and I have had the same surgery that the governor required, unfortunately with the same results—no relief—and I am sure there are probably other residents of Saipan who are also afflicted with this debilitating problem. I have really tried to stay out of this discussion about Governor Fitial's back problems, but you have made this an impossible task. I will endeavor to keep my remarks to a minimum, but feel it necessary to comment on some of the nonsensical statements you made.

First, I am supposing that you are somehow connected to the governor since you address him as "Uncle Ben," yet you are unaware that his surgery was *not* five years ago; he wasn't even governor five years ago. The surgery occurred in *late* 2006, the first year of his first term. Get your facts straight; I am sure the governor would appreciate it.

Second, I have had spinal stenosis for many years. You write as if you have a great deal of medical knowledge about spinal stenosis, so once again I am supposing that you are aware that there are two types of stenosis—cervical stenosis, which involves the spinal cord and as such is much more serious as it can cause paralysis from the neck to the feet, and lumbar stenosis, which involves the nerve endings and not the spinal cord, of which there are three categories: foraminal stenosis, central stenosis and far lateral stenosis. I do not know how many of these categories the governor is afflicted with, but I do know that I have all three of the types of lumbar stenosis, exacerbated by a right scoliosis (curvature of the spine) due to polio as a young child. However, *never* has a doctor, and believe me in my years, I have seen many, told me that my stenosis was life-threatening! Surgery was recommended, and I went to the mainland last summer for the express purpose of having corrective surgery again. The governor was luckier than I, as I was not a good candidate due to other medical complications.

Your pig metaphor may have some shock value, but wholly inappropriate. I *do* get the idea, but I'm sure the governor was comfortably anesthetized.

Third, the excruciating pain—oh yes, there is that! No one in this world can tell me anything about the pain that accompanies this medical problem! It is at times unbearable! Just walking from my bedroom to the kitchen is like walking on hot coals. But if you just sit down for a few minutes, the pain eases and after rest, you are ready to go again. In fact, I cannot even ride on one of the two roads that lead to my home, as the ruts, bumps and holes inflict even more pain on me.

Fourth, massage therapy—what can I say—it doesn't work for me, but I am not saying that it might not ease the governor's pain somewhat. If the masseuse was able to perform "life-saving therapy" at 3am, I'd certainly like to meet her! Perhaps you can answer this: If she *had* succeeded in making her way to Guam, would Governor Fitial's life then be in grave danger? I'll remind you that the governor himself said that she was *one of the best* massage therapists he had used. Surely, if our governor's life was in peril, other options could have been pursued. Another therapist, medication, maybe even dialing 911!

I will not presume to speak on the legality of the subject; that should be left to the proper authorities. I think it is sad, though, that Mr. Anderson compares this very serious subject to a Saturday Night Live comedy skit! There is nothing comical about such an egregious lapse of judgment.

Fifth, trying to blame the miscue of the governor on political opponents has been the status quo in the CNMI for far too long. Don't accept the blame for doing something very foolish when you can distract the public by accusing the accuser.

About a year ago, a friend suggested that I try acupuncture. Now that is something that I consider the closest thing to "life-saving"! After countless facet blocks, nerve blocks, steroid injections, I came back to Saipan and continued my sessions with Jung Sang Park of Brothers Oriental Medical Clinic. Initially, I went three times a week. Now I have progressed to the point where I can function with one treatment a week. When I started going to Jung Sang Park, I was unable to lie down on the table without assistance. I also required assistance to turn over from my back to my stomach. Now, I lie down by myself and turn over and get up at the end of the treatment. Also for the first time in years, I am able to sleep comfortably on a mattress—I have spent years sleeping on a sofa because that is where I was comfortable. I also use a TENS unit (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) at home. I place it on my back and watch TV or read. After 30 minutes, I feel much better. I would suggest that the governor try acupuncture, it won't save his life, but then neither will a massage!

I know this has gone on much longer than I intended and I sincerely apologize to the readers, but I felt it necessary to respond to Lee Anderson's diatribe against the many good, honest people of Saipan. I would suggest to him that the next time he wants to expound upon a subject about which he knows nothing about, he seek help from Google. I have stenosis, but that is what I did and I learned much about something that has caused me anguish for so many years.

Sylvia Wagner Haywood
I Denni, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼75°	▲85° ▼75°	▲85° ▼76°	▲84° ▼75°	▲84° ▼75°

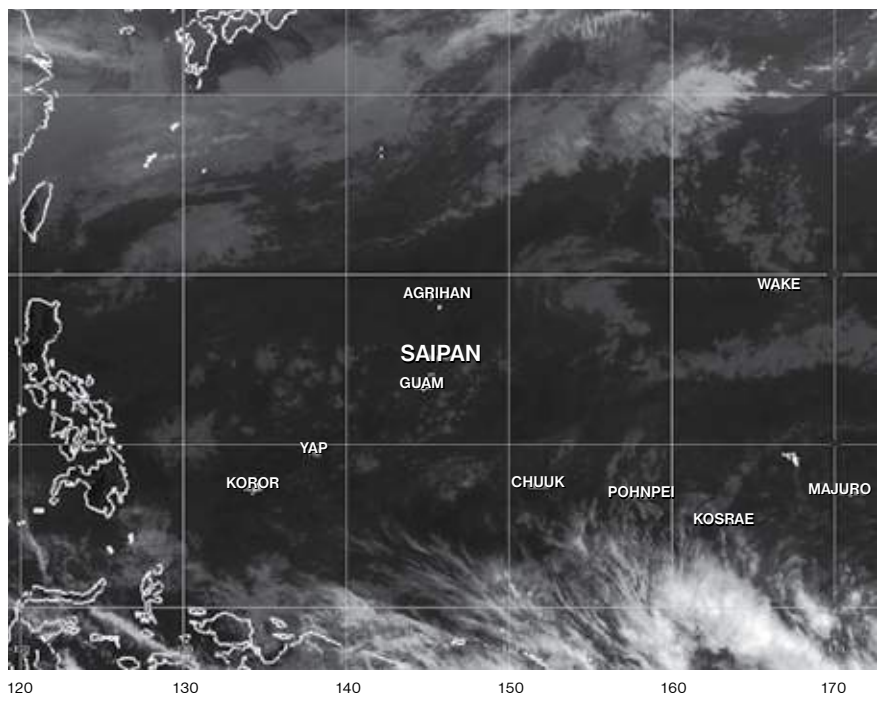
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Sunny	▲84	▼73
Palau	Mostly Sunny	▲90	▼77
Yap	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼76
Chuuk	Sunny	▲89	▼80
Pohnpei	Sunny	▲85	▼74
Kosrae	Partly Sunny	▲86	▼73
Majuro	Partly Sunny	▲84	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Sunny	▲73	▼59
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲28	▼18
Hong Kong	Dreary	▲71	▼63
Honolulu	Showers	▲74	▼65
London	Showers	▲46	▼36
Los Angeles	Mostly Cloudy	▲62	▼52
Manila	Sunny	▲89	▼74
Melbourne	Showers	▲86	▼64
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲81	▼69
New York	Sunny	▲40	▼28
Osaka	Cloudy	▲39	▼27
Paris	Cloudy	▲46	▼40
Pusan	Partly Sunny	▲39	▼17
Rome	Partly Sunny	▲53	▼44
Salem	Cloudy	▲49	▼36
San Francisco	Rain	▲58	▼48
Seoul	Sunny	▲23	▼ 7
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲ 41	▼27
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲43	▼27

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2010
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front enters the discussion area near 25N147E and extends southwestward to 22N140E and continues west to beyond 22N130E. Scattered to broken clouds and patchy rain are found along and up to 300 miles northwest of the front. A shear line enters the discussion area near 14N180 and stretches west to 15N170E to 14N160E to 19N151E. Scattered to broken clouds and patchy rain are located within 180 miles north of the boundary.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:12 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet
11:17 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
6:15 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:46 AM	6:16 PM
Friday	6:45 AM	6:17 PM
Saturday	6:45 AM	6:17 PM
Sunday	6:45 AM	6:18 PM
Monday	6:44 AM	6:18 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	11:13 PM	10:13 AM
Friday		10:58 AM
Saturday	12:09 AM	11:44 AM
Sunday	1:05 AM	12:33 PM
Monday	2:00 AM	1:24 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 28, 2010

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

CO9597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

CO9597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

CO9317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
CO9601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
CO9603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
CO9605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
CO9599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT
NW638	8:00am	10:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily
NW289	5:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

CA8282	3:15am	7:00am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 4, 5, 7 via PUS
CO9603/893	3:15pm	9:10pm	3, 5 via GUM-PALAU
OZ606/715	3:20pm	11:30pm	7 via ICN
CO9605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
CO9599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

CO9598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
CO9312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

CO9598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
CO9312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

CO9316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
CO9598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
CO9312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
CO9602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
CO9604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:35am+1	Daily via NRT effective Jan 25
NW277	8:30pm	1:00am+1	3, 6
NW639	9:00pm	1:35am+1	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW290	10:00am	2:35pm	Daily
NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	9:00pm	1:35am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm	
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

CA8281	6:40pm	1:55am+1	4, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4, 6 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/CO9596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
CO892/9596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	3,5 via PALAU-GUM
CO934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2 ,4 ,6, 7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2, 4 ,6 ,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CA: China Airlines; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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USCIS: Go to www.uscis.gov for immigration info

Federal govt's .gov Web sites provide many services for free

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is reminding people that its official federal government Web site ends in ".gov". You can check www.uscis.gov for immigration information.

USCIS provides information about immigration benefits in several ways:

■ Call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.

■ Visit our web site at www.uscis.gov and the special page at www.uscis.gov/cnmi

■ Make an appointment at www.uscis.gov to visit the USCIS Application Support Center (ASC) at TSL Plaza on Saipan. Walk-ins will be seen after customers with appointments.

■ Send an e-mail to uscis.saipan@dhs.gov

Forms: All USCIS immigration forms are available for free; go to www.uscis.gov/forms to download or call 1-800-375-5283 to have a form mailed to you.

InfoPass Appointments: InfoPass appointments are free and can be made at www.uscis.gov. Each person who needs to speak with an Immigration Services Officer should make a separate InfoPass appointment.

Case Status: To find out the status of a case filed with USCIS, go to www.uscis.gov. Select "After I File" and then "Check My Case Status". Enter your receipt number, which has three letters followed by 10 numbers.

Parole or Advance Parole: Go to www.uscis.gov/cnmi and look under "CNMI Updates" on the right side to see how to apply for Parole or Advance Parole.

General Information: For general information, check www.uscis.gov or call 1-800-375-5283 to see if we can answer your questions over the phone. You can call USCIS toll-free for automated information and live assistance about immigration services and benefits. People can access information through a menu of automated options 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. During regular business hours, customers who need more information or assistance can be transferred to a customer service representative. In the CNMI, live assistance is available Tuesday through Saturday, 6am to 11am local time.

Other Immigration-Related Information: More information on U.S. immigration-related and travel issues can be found at other federal government .GOV Web sites:

■ U.S. Department of Homeland Security - www.dhs.gov

■ U.S. Custom and Border Protection - www.cbp.gov

■ U.S. Immigration and Customers Enforcement - www.ice.gov

■ Transportation Security Administration - www.tsa.gov

■ U.S. Department of Justice-http://www.justice.gov

■ U.S. Department of State-www.travel.state.gov

Source: USCIS

Zoning sets two important undertakings this month

The Zoning Board and Office is beginning two important projects this February. First, the Board will seek comments about how the current zoning law is working, and will update and revise the current zoning law, with the goal of addressing the concerns expressed by the community, private sector and the legislature. Second, the Zoning Office will begin implementing the islandwide junk vehicle removal and recycling program.

Fusco

Zoning Board chair Herminia Fusco said, "The standing committee on Saipan Zoning Law Review was established on Nov. 20, 2009, to review the current Saipan Zoning Law of 2008, and to recommend to the Commonwealth Zoning Board proposed changes, modifications, amendments and repealers to the law."

"In an effort to facilitate discussion and avoid duplication of efforts each Zoning board member was assigned certain sections of the zoning law to look at and to come up with the suggested amendments or recommendations. The zoning office staff is also working on their recommendations, which will be presented to the standing committee. The staff's recommendations are a critical part of the process since the staff deals with the law on a daily basis," Fusco said.

The Zoning Board members and staff will continue their village meetings and public consultation and information campaign over the next two months to obtain feedback required to update the 2008 Saipan Zoning Law. The dates and times will be announced in the media. The board encourages anyone with suggestions that might improve the language of the law, or changes to the zone boundaries, to contact the Zoning Office.

A suggestion form is available on the Zoning Web site (www.zoning.gov.mp) or at the zoning office in Dandan (telephone no. 234-9661). Anyone who would like to discuss their suggestions may call the zoning office for assistance.

Written suggestions may be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office no later than 4:30pm, March 30, 2010, or via e-mail, staff@zoning.gov.mp. Suggestions may also be mailed to the Commonwealth Zoning Board, Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950 for submission to the board's standing committee on Saipan Zoning Law Review.

Once the board is satisfied with the package of proposed amendments, it will circulate them for public review and comment. Ultimately any proposed amendments will be sent to the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation, which will decide whether to amend the Zoning Law.

ON THE NET

■ www.zoning.gov.mp

The Zoning Office has extended the deadline for the Request for Expressions of Interest to participate in the Zoning Office's islandwide junk vehicles removal and recycling program to Feb. 19, 2010.

"Even though we received several recycling companies expressions of interest, we still wanted to get more recycling companies to participate. Also, the procedure for implementing the law is in the process of being finalized by the Acting Zoning Administrator and the Zoning Board's attorney," said Fusco.

"The original start date of the program was Jan. 1 but it is now targeted to start about the last week of February. The Zoning Office will publish the approved list of the selected company or companies and will advise the public of the start date of the program, Fusco said. ***(PR)***

More visitors to Rota seen with Continental flight revisions

Airline connections for visitors from Guam to the "Friendly Island" of Rota will become much more convenient with Continental Micronesia's revised schedule of two weekly flights between the islands from March 28 to Oct. 4, 2010.

The service, operated by Cape Air as Continental Connection, will fly from Guam on Sundays and Thursdays at 6:30pm and return from Rota on Mondays and Fridays at 5am. The ATR service provides 46 economy class seats.

"These additional flights will make Rota much more accessible to visitors, including Guam residents, military personnel, and foreign visitors who can now connect much more easily through Guam to experience Rota's renowned natural beauty and hospitality," said Marianas Visitors Authority chair Jerry Tan. "We're very encouraged by the possibilities opened by Continental Micronesia with these new flights."

The MVA hopes to capitalize on visitors through Guam from nine Japanese cities served by Continental: Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Sendai, Sapporo, Niigata, Okayama, Hiroshima, and Fukuoka.

MVA

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, seated center, met with officials of Continental Micronesia and the Marianas Visitors Authority last week on Saipan to discuss Continental's flight revision to the island of Rota beginning March 28, 2010. Pictured from left are CNMI Lt. Gov. Eloy Inos, MVA managing director Perry Tenorio, MVA vice chair Marian Aldan-Pierce, Fitial, MVA chair Jerry Tan, and Continental Micronesia president and COO Charles Duncan.

"Our Continental Micronesia charters from Narita to Saipan last summer and our Japan to Rota charter program with KNT have both been very successful. And we continue to receive positive feedback regarding the service our Continental Connection partner, Cape Air, provides between Guam and the CNMI," said Continental Micronesia president and COO Charles Duncan. "We look forward to continuing our partnership with the MVA and the CNMI government."

On Sundays and Thursdays, passengers from Sendai can connect to Rota through Guam in three hours, passengers from Narita, Osaka, Nagoya, Fukuoka and Hiroshima in five hours; and passengers from Honolulu in one hour. On Mondays and Friday, passengers leaving Rota can connect on Guam to Sapporo, Fukuoka, Honolulu, Osaka, Nagoya, Narita and Okayama within three hours.

"We're very encouraged by Continental's increasing presence in the Northern Marianas," said Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, following a Jan. 28 meeting with Duncan and tourism officials on the flight additions. "Ultimately, the Northern Marianas aims to see the return of direct flights, and we will continue to work with Continental on making that choice a profitable one for them."

Continental brought in over 5,500 Japanese visitors to Rota in 2008 and 2009 through joint charters with travel agents KNT and PDI. In addition, Continental's 2009 summer charters brought over 15,000 visitors from Japan to the Northern Marianas. ***(MVA)***

MIMC POLICY COMMITTEE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CNMI Military Integration Management Committee chair Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and vice chair Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos are joined by the rest of the Policy Committee members, standing from left, MIMC coordinator Tom Linden, Northern Islands Mayor Ramona Rebuenog, Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz, Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola, Saipan Mayor Donald Flores and Senate President Paul Manglona. Not in photo: House Speaker Froilan Tenorio. The MIMC was created through a Charter in June 2009 to serve as the planning and policy making entity for all activities that relate to the expansion of military training and other defense transformation initiatives in the CNMI and Guam. The CNMI-MIMC is the official entity through which the CNMI will interface with the Department of the Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, JGPO, Department of Defense, and all other military representatives in regards to the military buildup.

Business

Stock Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA 4,673.20 Up 44.40 (0.96%)			
HONG KONG 20,533.34 Up 261.16 (1.29%)	JAKARTA 2,600.65 Up 20.40 (0.79%)		
TOKYO 10,403.78 Up 32.69 (0.32%)	K. LUMPUR 1,263.39 Down 0.37 (-0.03%)		
MANILA 2,884.81 Up 20.63 (0.72%)	SINGAPORE 2,747.36 Up 26.49 (0.97%)		
SEOUL 1,613.43 Up 17.62 (1.10%)	BANGKOK 702.02 Up 7.95 (1.15%)		

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW 10,296.85	111.32	
NASDAQ 2,190.06	18.86	
S&P 1,103.32	14.14	

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.1288
British Pound	0.6254
Canadian Dollar	1.0577
Chinese Renminbi	6.8270
Euro	0.7165
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7683
Indian Rupee	46.0900
Indonesian Rupiah	9,345.0000
Japanese Yen	90.4510
Malaysian Ringgit	3.4103
New Zealand Dollar	1.4070
Philippine Peso	46.2300
Singapore Dollar	1.4098
South Korean Won	1,151.7500
Swiss Franc	1.0567
Taiwan Dollar	31.9910
Thailand Baht	33.0750

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

US Jan. auto sales rise; safety fears trip Toyota

DETROIT (AP)—The U.S. auto industry rebounded from last January's sales collapse with one big exception: Toyota, which lost an estimated 20,000 sales after it stopped selling eight models because of defective gas pedals.

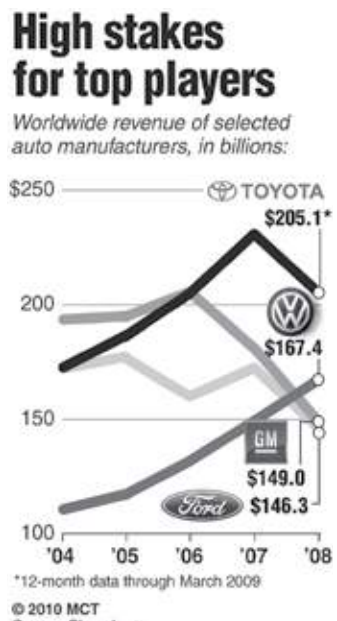
Last month, U.S. sales of cars and light trucks rose 6 percent from a year earlier, thanks to increases in fleet sales and strong demand for newly redesigned vehicles such as the Hyundai Tucson SUV and Buick LaCrosse sedan. Big winners included General Motors Co., Ford Motor Co., Nissan Motor Co. and Hyundai Motor Co., which all posted double-digit sales increases.

But Toyota's sales slipped 16 percent, and they could fall further as its sales stoppage drags into February. It was the first time since February 1998 that Toyota's monthly U.S. sales fell below 100,000 vehicles, according to Ward's AutoInfoBank.

Toyota's troubles helped to knock the Camry off its traditional perch as the top-selling car in the U.S. Last month the Camry ranked fifth in car sales, passed by Honda's Accord, Nissan's Altima, Toyota's Corolla and the Chevrolet Malibu. The Camry has been the top-selling car in the U.S. for the last eight years.

AP

2010 Ford Mustangs are lined up at a dealership in San Jose, Calif., Monday, Feb. 1, 2010.



Toyota announced a recall of eight models, including the Camry, on Jan. 21 and halted sales of those models five days later because the accelerator pedals could stick and cause a crash. The recall has affected a total of 2.3 million vehicles in the U.S. Besides the Camry, the other models in the recall include Corolla and Avalon cars, the Matrix hatchback, the Tundra pickup, the Sequoia SUV and the RAV4 and Highlander.

Bob Carter, Toyota's group vice president and general manager, said the suspended models amount to 60 percent of Toyota dealers' inventory. All eight saw sales declines. In December, most of them saw increases. The hybrid Prius, which wasn't affected in the recall, posted a 13 percent gain.

Toyota's pain wasn't a gain for other automakers. They saw more Toyota owners browsing in their showrooms but few sales despite incentives offered by GM, Ford and some New York-area Honda dealers.

Ken Czubay, Ford Motor Co.'s vice president of sales, said Toyota's actions may have hurt overall sales because consumers and dealers were unsure of the value of Toyota trade-ins.

"There was a tremendous amount of uncertainty. I don't think the month enjoyed its normal pickup on the last weekend," Czubay said.

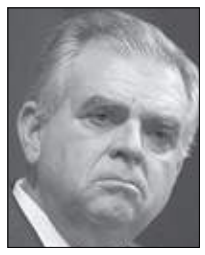
John McEleney, who operates a Toyota dealership in Clinton, Iowa, expected January sales to be up 40 percent over last year until the automaker halted them. Now, January sales will be up 10 percent at the most, said McEleney, who is also president of the National Automobile Dealers Association.

"It died off last week because of the stop sale," he said. "It comes at a tough time for dealers coming out of the recession."

Carter said Tuesday that parts to fix the recalled vehicles are on their way to Toyota dealerships. Customers will also start receiving notices this week, staggered over time, about where and when they can have their vehicles repaired.

AP Interview: LaHood says Toyota slow to respond

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Obama administration's top transportation official sharply criticized Toyota Motor Corp. on Tuesday for dragging its feet on safety concerns over its gas pedals, suggesting the automaker was "a little safety deaf" to mounting evidence of problems.



LaHood

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood told The Associated Press that federal safety officials had to "wake them up" to the seriousness of the safety issues that eventually led Toyota to recall millions of popular brands like Camry and Corolla. That included a visit to Toyota's offices in Japan to convince them to take action.

"They should have taken it seriously from the very beginning when we first started discussing it with them," LaHood told AP. "Maybe they were a little safety deaf."

LaHood also said the government was considering civil penalties for Toyota over its handling of the recalls but declined to elaborate. The potential fines were first reported by the Detroit News. The largest auto industry fine came in 2004, when General Motors paid $1 million for responding too slowly on a recall of nearly 600,000 vehicles over windshield wiper failure.

The pointed comments came as Toyota showed just how painful the recall has been for the automaker that makes some of the best-selling vehicles in the United States. Sales fell 16 percent in January, hurt by Toyota's decision to halt sales while it sorted out a fix for problems with faulty gas pedals. Most other automakers reported sales gains for the month as the broader industry continued to show signs of improvement.

One of the more trusted brands of cars and trucks, Toyota is scrambling to repair both vehicles subject to its broad recalls and its image with consumers. Toyota executives apologized Monday to consumers for the problems, which has shaken the confidence of many Toyota drivers.

Japan gets 14 complaints over Toyota Prius brakes

TOKYO (AP)—The Japanese government said Wednesday it has received 14 complaints in Japan about brake problems with Toyota's popular Prius hybrid.

The automaker's sales are being battered in the U.S. after massive recalls of top-selling models to fix a gas pedal that can stick in the depressed position. The new Prius gas-electric hybrid, which went on sale last year, is not part of the global recalls which cover nearly 4.5 million vehicles.

The 14 complaints included an accident in July 2009, in which a Prius crashed head on into another car at an intersection. Transport ministry official Masaya Ota said two people were slightly injured in the accident.

"The complaints involve the new Toyota Prius model, and the vehicles were all made in Japan," Ota said. "Prius drivers complained brakes were not so sharp."

The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has received about 100 complaints involving the brakes of the Prius new model. Two involved crashes resulting in injuries.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Cadmium found in adult jewelry; 1 store pulls item

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Concern about the heavy metal cadmium in jewelry grew Tuesday as a California environmental group said new testing of adult necklaces and bracelets bought at three leading retailers, including Saks Fifth Avenue and Aeropostale, detected high levels of the toxic material—as much as 75 percent by weight. One of the pieces was made in China and another was made in India. Labeling on a black-colored link necklace, purchased at Saks for $69.99, did not indicate where it was made. Based on the results of its testing, the Center for Environmental Health said it would seek a ban on cadmium in all jewelry. The center said it began lab testing adult jewelry for cadmium after an Associated Press investigation reported last month that pieces of cheap children's jewelry imported from China contained levels of cadmium of up to 91 percent of their total content.

Dems plan jobs bill, challenging GOP's acts

WASHINGTON (AP)—Scuffling over jobs and taxes, congressional Democrats began refining their election-year jobs package Tuesday in a challenge to Republicans to balance their party's complaints about big spending with action to help unemployed Americans. At the same time, the Democrats' effort promises to test President Barack Obama's own ability to set the legislative agenda, Democratic senators were seeking bipartisan support for tax incentives to businesses that add payroll this year. Many Republicans were noncommittal, but they promised an election year fight against Obama's long-stated plan to let income tax rates return to higher levels for families making more than $250,000 a year.

Signs of strength in housing market boost stocks

NEW YORK (AP)—Signs of strength in the housing market pushed the Dow Jones industrial average to its second straight gain of more than 100 points. An increase in the number of people with contracts to buy homes and the first profit at homebuilder D.R. Horton in three years raised hopes that one of the weakest parts of the economy is improving. The Dow rose 111 points Tuesday, boosting its two-day gain to 230 points and extending a recovery from a slide in January. It was the biggest back-to-back advance for the Dow in three months.

Nation

Defense officials say lift military ban on gays

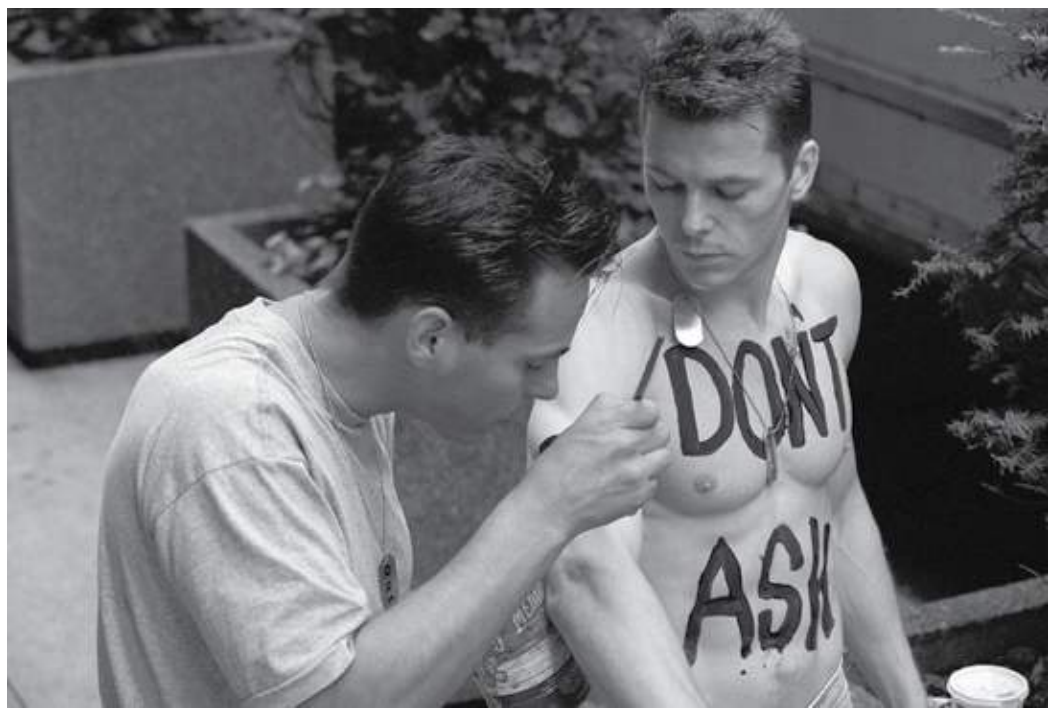
WASHINGTON (AP)—It's time to repeal the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy and allow gay troops to serve openly for the first time in history, the nation's top defense officials declared Tuesday, with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff proclaiming that service members should not be forced to "lie about who they are."

However, both Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen asked for a year to study the impact before Congress would lift the controversial policy.

Reversing the Pentagon's 17-year-old policy toward gays "comes down to integrity," for the military as an institution as well as the service members themselves, Mullen told a Senate hearing. Unpersuaded, several Republican senators said they would oppose any congressional effort to repeal the policy.

Ten months before voters elect a new Congress, some Democratic leaders also were leery of trying to change the policy this year, when both sides concede Republicans are likely to pick up seats, especially after GOP Sen.-elect Scott Brown's surprise victory last month in Massachusetts.

Repealing don't-ask-don't-tell is not a winning campaign strategy for a party under siege especially in the South and Midwest.



AP

In this Sunday, June 27, 1993 file photo, a man who wished not to be identified has the slogan "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" painted on his torso as he prepares to march in the 24th Annual Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade in New York.

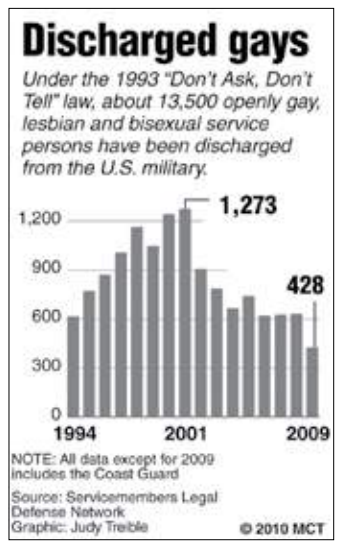
"What do I want members to do in their districts? I want them to focus on jobs and fiscal responsibility," said House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., classifying gays in the military in a category of "a lot of other issues" that will invariably come up.

"It's never a good year" for Democrats to bring up the controversial policy, said Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin of Illinois. "You can expect that it's going to be a rough ride."

However, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he didn't see why it should wait another year.

The Pentagon announced an 11-month review of how the ban could be lifted, as President Barack Obama has said he will work to do. But there is no deadline for ending the policy that dates to President Bill Clinton's tenure and that gay rights advocates are pressing to overturn.

In the meantime, Gates announced plans to loosen enforcement rules for the policy, which says, in essence, that gays may serve so long as they keep their sexuality private.



Obama has called for repeal but has done little in his first year in office to advance that goal. If he succeeds, it would mark the biggest shake-up to military personnel policies since President Harry S. Truman's 1948 executive order integrating the services.

APNewsBreak: US study shows drop in child abuse

NEW YORK (AP)—A massive new federal study documents an unprecedented and dramatic decrease in incidents of serious child abuse, especially sexual abuse. Experts hailed the findings as proof that crackdowns and public awareness campaigns had made headway.

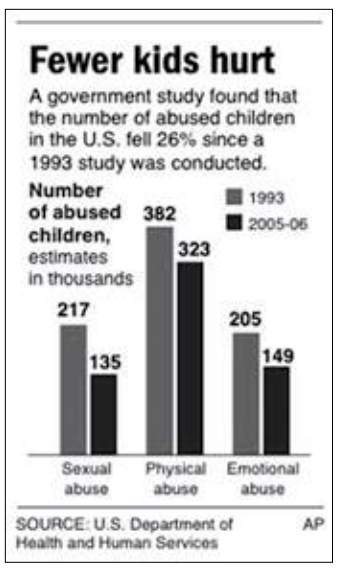
An estimated 553,000 children suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse in 2005-06, down 26 percent from the estimated 743,200 abuse victims in 1993, the study found.

"It's the first time since we started collecting data about these things that we've seen substantial declines over a long period, and that's tremendously encouraging," said professor David Finkelhor of the University of New Hampshire, a leading researcher in the field of child abuse.

"It does suggest that the mobilization around this issue is helping and it's a problem that is amenable to solutions," he said.

The findings were contained in the fourth installment of the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect, a congressionally mandated study that has been conducted periodically by the Department of Health and Human Services. The previous version was issued in 1996, based on 1993 data.

The new study is based on information from more than 10,700 "sentinels"—such as child welfare workers, police officers, teachers, health care professionals and day care workers—in 122 counties across the country. The detailed data collected from them was then used to make national estimates.



The number of sexually abused children decreased from 217,700 in 1993 to 135,300 in 2005-2006—a 38 percent drop, the study shows. The number of children who experienced physical abuse fell by 15 percent and the number of emotionally abused children dropped by 27 percent.

The 455-page study shied away from trying to explain the trends, but other experts offered their theories.

Rangel: Lawmakers writing compromise health bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—Leading lawmakers hoping to revive President Barack Obama's stalled health care overhaul have started writing a compromise bill, but it's unclear when the legislation will be ready for votes, a top House Democrat said Tuesday.

The measure would change the massive Senate-approved health bill to what bargainers from the White House, Senate and House agreed to last month, Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., said in a brief interview.

Rangel's remarks, if borne out, could be the first concrete sign that Democrats will try enacting major health legislation in the wake of the Republican upset in a Massachusetts special election that cost them their crucial 60th Senate seat. Stunned by that setback, the White House and top Democrats have been conceding that they no longer know if they have the votes to pass health legislation, or what such a bill would look like.

In January, White House and congressional negotiators agreed to ease a Senate-approved tax on high-cost health insurance plans opposed by unions and many House Democrats. They also planned to remove a Senate provision having the federal government fully pay for an expansion of Medicaid coverage solely for Nebraska, one of whose senators, Democrat Ben Nelson, was the crucial 60th vote for the Senate bill at the time.

Rangel said leaders have to decide whether the health package would begin moving before or after Congress tackles legislation aimed at creating jobs.

"The question is when are we going to do it," said Rangel, who chairs the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee. "We got to move on with jobs. It's not clear to me what the priority is going to be."

He said a fight between liberal and conservative Democrats over how to limit federal financing for abortion remains unresolved.

Lawmakers upset over Obama's 2nd anti-Vegas remark

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Nevada lawmakers lashed out at President Barack Obama on Tuesday after he made another reference to Las Vegas while explaining how people should make tough choices on spending.

The issue is sensitive to Sin City because its economy is largely based on tourism, and several lawmakers said they were shocked that Obama singled out Las Vegas again after commenting one year ago about bailed-out banks holding meetings here.

"When times are tough, you tighten your belts," Obama said, according to a White House transcript of his appearance Tuesday at a high school in North Nashua, N.H.

"You don't go buying a boat when you can barely pay your mortgage," Obama said. "You don't blow a bunch of cash on Vegas when you're trying to save for college. You prioritize. You make tough choices."

The comments quickly sparked a flurry of reaction from federal, state and local lawmakers in the Silver State, which had an unemployment rate of 13 percent in December.

"I'll do everything I can to give him the boot," Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman said during a hastily called news conference, adding that he was incensed when he heard about the comments and said he would no longer welcome the president here if he visits.

"This president is a real slow learner," said Goodman, who is not affiliated with a political party.

"Enough is enough!" Democratic Congresswoman Shelley Berkley said in a statement. "President Obama needs to stop picking on Las Vegas and he needs to let Americans decide for themselves how and where to spend their hard-earned vacation dollars."

Nevada's economy has been hit hard with foreclosures, unemployment and bankruptcies during the past two years as consumers everywhere tighten leisure spending and companies spend less on meetings and conventions.

Harry Reid, Democratic Senate majority leader and one of Obama's closest allies, issued a statement headlined "Reid to Obama: 'Lay off Las Vegas'" and was unusually blunt in his reaction.

ACROSS THE NATION

1st primary of year sets up showdown in Illinois

CHICAGO (AP)—Illinois voters in the nation's first primary picked candidates Tuesday for an election in which Democrats will try to defend the governor's office and a U.S. Senate seat from a Republican Party eager to exploit political disarray in President Barack Obama's home state. The targets include the Senate seat Obama held before moving to the White House. Illinois Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias won the Democratic Senate nomination. He will face Republican Mark Kirk, a moderate five-term congressman. Kirk is likely to argue that the 33-year-old Giannoulias, who previously worked for a family bank that's now in financial trouble, lacks the experience and judgment to serve in the Senate.

Murder-suicide note by CA man was posted on Net

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A California man who killed himself and his 9-month-old son in an apparent murder-suicide left dozens of angry, desperate messages to the boy's mother, including a lengthy suicide note and a memorial collage that appeared on the Web hours after he was dead. The bodies of 25-year-old Stephen Garcia of Pinon Hills and his son Wyatt were found early Sunday on an isolated dirt trail in the San Bernardino Mountains. The discovery came after authorities learned that Garcia had taken the boy during a court-ordered visit and threatened to kill him and commit suicide.

Scottsdale woman arrested in missing baby case

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP)—A woman who wanted to adopt an Arizona baby missing for more than a month was arrested Tuesday, but police said she was not connected to the boy's disappearance and that she and her husband likely don't know where the boy is. Tammi Smith, 37, was interviewed at Tempe police headquarters and later booked into Maricopa County jail on charges of custodial interference, conspiracy to commit custodial interference and forgery. Lt. Mike Horn said the charges stem from Smith's repeated and apparently desperate attempts to adopt 8-month-old Gabriel Johnson, not from the boy's Dec. 26 disappearance in San Antonio.

Asia

Taliban refuse to prove leader survived strike

MIR ALI, Pakistan (AP)—The Pakistani Taliban refused Tuesday to provide proof their leader survived a U.S. missile attack, just one day after promising to do just that. The reversal added to speculation that Hakimullah Mehsud was mortally wounded last month in a strike close to the Afghan border.

The backtracking came on a day in which U.S. drones launched an unusually intense attack in the northwest. The aircraft fired 17 missiles at houses, cars and bunkers in a region dominated by militants battling U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan, killing 14 insurgents, Pakistani intelligence officials said.

The late-night missile strikes were the latest in an intensified CIA-led campaign in Pakistan, reflecting a U.S. belief that the eight-year war in Afghanistan cannot be turned around without the destruction of militant safe havens across the border.

The death of Mehsud, who commands the Pakistan branch of the Taliban, would be a major blow to an al-Qaida-allied movement blamed for scores of suicide bombings in this country and suspected in a deadly attack on the CIA late last year just across the border in Afghanistan.

AP

In this Oct. 4, 2009 file photo, Pakistani Taliban chief Hakimullah Mehsud arrives to meet with media in Sararogha of Pakistani tribal area of South Waziristan along the Afghanistan border.

In a video broadcast last month, Hakimullah Mehsud sat next to the Jordanian suicide bomber who killed seven CIA employees in the Dec. 30 attack. The bomber said the attack was meant to avenge the death of Hakimullah Mehsud's predecessor, Baitullah Mehsud, in a CIA missile strike.

China-US tensions spiking over Taiwan, Dalai Lama

BEIJING (AP)—China is pledging to retaliate against the U.S. over arms sales to Taiwan and warning of further damage to ties if President Barack Obama meets the Dalai Lama.

There's likely to be even more turbulence ahead: Trade friction, currency rate woes and allegations of cyber-spying are already roiling relations.

The rhetoric also is sharpening in a disagreement over new sanctions against Iran, with Beijing refusing U.S. calls to push Tehran harder to cooperate with nuclear inspectors.

Yet the sheer number and variety of current disputes also reflects a newly combative approach by Beijing, emboldened by its $2.4 trillion in foreign holdings—about $800 billion of which is invested in U.S. Treasury securities—and relative success handling the impact of the global financial crisis.

A tough line is essential for the communist leadership that places a premium on being deemed by the deeply nationalist public to be "tough enough to defend China in a dangerous world," said John Garver, an expert on Chinese foreign policy at Georgia Tech.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Philippine senator flees abroad to escape charges

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Philippine opposition senator facing murder charges said he had fled the country to escape what he called political harassment by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's government. Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a former national police chief and one of Arroyo's staunchest critics, sent a statement to Philippine media Tuesday saying he was a victim of conspiracy and feared for his life if he had stayed in the Philippines to fight the charges against him. State prosecutor Peter Ong said last month the charges against Lacson were based on physical evidence and witness testimony, including that of a former police officer claiming that Lacson gave the order to kill a prominent publicist and his driver in 2000. Publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer had represented top political figures, including ousted President Joseph Estrada. Both Lacson and Estrada deny any hand in the murders.

US warns Japan child custody laws could harm ties

TOKYO (AP)—Steve Christie cannot see his son because his Japanese ex-wife has sole custody, a typical arrangement in Japan. He is one of about 70 American parents in that position, and the U.S. warned Tokyo on Tuesday that it must revise its family laws or risk hurting ties between the two longtime allies. Laws that allow only one parent to have custody of children in cases of divorce—nearly always the mother—set Japan apart from most other developed countries. They also leave most fathers, including foreigners, unable to see their children until they are grown. "This matter has raised very real concerns among senior and prominent Americans in Congress, on Capitol Hill and elsewhere," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell told reporters in Tokyo after meeting with affected American parents in Japan. He called their predicament "heartbreaking."

Chinese, Russian activists nominated for Nobel

OSLO (AP)—Candidates for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize include a Russian human rights group, a Chinese dissident and an inanimate object: the Internet, people who made the nominations said Tuesday. As the submission deadline for the coveted award closed, the Nobel Committee maintained its tradition of giving no hints—the contenders are kept secret for 50 years. But some nominations were announced by those who made them. Those with nomination rights include former peace laureates, members of national governments and legislatures, selected university professors and others. Erna Solberg, the head of Norway's Conservative Party, put forth Russian human rights activist Svetlana Gannushkina and Memorial, a prominent rights group she works with.

World

World donations stack up in devastated Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—A generous world has flooded Haiti with donations, but anger and desperation are mounting as the aid stacks up inside this broken country.

Bottlenecks at key transportation points and scattered violence, including an armed group's attack on a food convoy, have slowed the distribution of food and medicine from the port, airport and a warehouse in the Cite-Soleil slum. U.S. air traffic controllers have lined up 2,550 incoming flights through March 1, but some 25 flights a day aren't taking their slots. Communication breakdowns between Haitians and their foreign counterparts are also endemic.

"Aid is bottlenecking at the Port-au-Prince airport. It's not getting into the field," said Mike O'Keefe, who runs Banyan Air Service in Fort Lauderdale.

■ ■ ■

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—A Haitian judge on Tuesday questioned a group of U.S. Baptist missionaries arrested trying to leave Haiti with a busload of children they gathered from the disaster zone.

The investigating magistrate met with the five women for several hours at judicial police headquarters, where they are jailed, and will follow up with the five men on Wednesday, according to the Haiti's communications minister. No lawyers were present.

The judge is to report to a district attorney, who decides if the Americans are to be formally charged with a crime.

Minister Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassegue said the evidence will be presented to a Haitian district attorney to decide whether to file charges. She denied allegations by an attorney for the Americans that they were being subject to "inhumane" conditions.

Intel chief: Al-Qaida likely to attempt attack

WASHINGTON (AP)—Al-Qaida can be expected to attempt an attack on the United States in the next three to six months, senior U.S. intelligence officials told Congress Tuesday.

The terrorist organization is deploying operatives to the United States to carry out new attacks from inside the country, including "clean" recruits with a negligible trail of terrorist contacts, CIA Director Leon Panetta said. The chilling warning comes as Christmas Day airline attack suspect Umar Farouk Abdulmutullab is cooperating with federal investigators, a federal law enforcement official said Tuesday.

Al-Qaida is also inspiring homegrown extremists to trigger violence on their own, Panetta said.

The annual assessment of the nation's terror threats provided no startling new terror trends, but amplified growing concerns since the Christmas Day airline attack in Detroit that militants are growing harder to detect and moving more quickly in their plots.

"The biggest threat is not so much that we face an attack like 9/11. It is that al-Qaida is adapting its methods in ways that oftentimes make it difficult to detect," Panetta told the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Iran: US missile system to sow Gulf division

TEHRAN (AP)—Iran on Tuesday warned its Arab neighbors in the Persian Gulf that the U.S. is trying to drive a wedge between them by ramping up its missile defense systems in the region.

The comments deepen tensions at a time when Iran faces possible new sanctions over its nuclear ambitions.

U.S. military officials said over the weekend that the systems - involving upgraded Patriot missiles on land and more U.S. Navy ships capable of destroying missiles in flight—is intended to counter a potential Iranian missile strike.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad met Tuesday with the crown prince of Qatar, one of four Arab nations where the U.S. has based Patriot missile systems, and told him the West was seeking to divide them.

"Westerners do not want friendly relations between countries in the region. Their life is dependent on rifts and insecurity," the president told the visiting crown prince, Sheik Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, whose country hosts the largest U.S. base in the Gulf.

"The enemies intend to extend the fire of war in the entire region to solve their own political and economic problems," state TV quoted Ahmadinejad as saying in their meeting.

WORLD BRIEFS

Militants pledge to float more bombs toward Israel

JERUSALEM (AP)—Palestinian militants said Tuesday they had launched a large number of floating explosives into the Mediterranean Sea to avenge the death of a top Hamas commander, a day after two bomb-laden barrels washed up on Israel's coastline. Israeli authorities launched an intensive search for new bombs, closing miles of beaches, deploying robotic bomb squads and ordering surfers out of the wintry waters. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blamed Hamas and hinted at retaliation.

Ahmadinejad proposes prisoner swap for US hikers

TEHRAN (AP)—Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Tuesday proposed a swap of Iranians in U.S. prisons for three American hikers being held in Tehran. Ahmadinejad said in interview with state TV that there were ongoing negotiations about exchanging the hikers for several Iranians jailed for years in the United States. "There are some talks under way to have an exchange, if it is possible," he said. "Recently they (the U.S.) have sent messages, we answered to bring them (the Iranians), to bring these people (the hikers). We are hopeful that all prisoners will be released."

Iran says ready to send uranium abroad as UN wants

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran said on Tuesday it was ready to send its uranium abroad for further enrichment as requested by the U.N. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced the decision in an interview with state Iranian television. He said Iran will have "no problem" giving the West its low-enriched uranium and taking it back several months later when it is enriched by 20 percent. The decision could signal a major shift in the Iranian position on the issue.

Environment

Safeguarding your business against pesticide violations

Part 1 of a 3-part series

Businesses can avoid pesticide violations by complying with CNMI regulations. The Pesticides Regulations were established to control the importation, distribution, sale and use of pesticides to prevent environmental contamination and protect public health.

The pesticide program at the Division of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classify pesticides as either General Use or Restricted Use.

General Use Pesticides are those that, when used as directed by the label, should not cause adverse health effects to the user. General Use Pesticides may be used by anyone.

Restricted Use Pesticides are those that may pose an unreasonable risk to the user or environment even when used as directed on the label. These pesticides must be used by or under the direct supervision of certified applicators (persons certified in pesticide application) and are not available to the general public.

Malathion, Dibrom, Sevin, Lannate, and Pounce are insecticides commonly used by CNMI farmers. Round-Up, a herbicide and Duersban, an insecticide, are commonly used to control weeds and ants on golf courses.

Importing pesticides

Businesses or persons desiring to import a pesticide into the CNMI shall submit a Notice of Intent to Import pesticides and devices to the Division of Environmental Quality.

The Notice of Intent to Import must be submitted at least 10 working days prior to the arrival of the shipment, accompanied by the filing fee.

Upon arrival of the pesticide shipment into the CNMI, the person or company must submit a Notice of Arrival of pesticide and devices shipment.

Pesticide shipment may be detained or denied access if the importer fails to submit a DEQ approved notice of intent to import and notice of arrival of pesticide products. These products may then be confiscated and exported to the originating country or disposed of by DEQ at the expense of the importer.

Using or selling or distributing pesticides

Application fees are required for using and applying pesticides. For rates, visit www.deq.gov.mp.

Persons engaged in the sale or distribution of restricted use pesticides and who is not a certified applicator shall obtain a Pesticide Dealer's License Application from DEQ. This application fee is two hundred dollars. This license must be renewed each year at least thirty days before the expiration date.

EPA Registered pesticides

Legal products are registered with the EPA and have on the label an EPA Registration Number **(EPA Reg. No.)** and an EPA Establishment Number **(EPA Est. No.)**. The label must have complete instructions including where the product can be used, application instructions, what personal protective equipment to wear, and proper storage and disposal of the pesticide. **These instructions must be in English.** Importation of products with labelling other than English is a violation and may result in your business being fined.

For general information, you can visit the US EPA office of Pesticides at www.epa.gov/pesticides. DEQ's pesticide program can be reached at 664-8500 or visit www.deq.gov.mp

To be continued.

DEQ Monthly Cleanup Brigade

The Division of Environmental Quality cleanup brigade will be at it again, picking up trash at Coral Ocean Point beach in Koblerville.

If you would like to volunteer your time to clean and beautify our island, meet with the group on Saturday, Feb. 6, 2010, at 8am at the COP Beach parking lot. Volunteers will split into groups and go east or west cleaning the beach until 10am and break for drinks and then continue, if needed.

This month, outstanding brigade volunteers who participated in at least 10 monthly cleanups will receive a brigade cap and those who participated in at least three cleanups will receive a green brigade t-shirt.

This is a cleanup that should not be missed, so join DEQ's cleanup brigade and "Pick It Up!" Let us work together for the health of our coral reefs and cleanliness of our beaches for everyone to enjoy.

For more information about volunteering, contact the DEQ office at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***

DO YOUR PART

Recycle your way to less waste

By TERRI BENNETT
THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

MCT

The easiest way to do your part is to simply, recycle. It's also one of the most effective ways to conserve natural resources, create less pollution and reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill.

The easiest way to Do Your Part is to simply recycle. It's also one of the most effective ways to conserve natural resources, create less pollution and reduce the amount of waste sent to the landfill.

Seventy-five percent of the waste we generate in American homes is recyclable but less than 35 percent is actually making it to a recycling center. Ways for all of us to do an even better job.

Make It Easy: Most of us keep our recycling bins outside or in the garage, which isn't always convenient. Put other containers throughout your home to serve as recycling bins—especially in places where it's easy to forget to recycle. One of those places is the bathroom. Think of all the empty shampoo bottles, toilet paper rolls, and even those cardboard soap boxes that usually get tossed in the trash. In your home office, have another basket to collect paper for recycling. By spreading out small containers for recycling around the house, the entire family will be more inclined to think twice before throwing something in the garbage.

Know Your Numbers: All plastic containers have a little number inside recycling arrows located on the bottom. It identifies the type of plastic used to make the product. Many local curbside recycling programs accept products marked with a No. 1 or No. 2 but some take all seven types of plastic.

You can learn about the different types of plastic and what your local recycling program accepts at Earth911.com. Then when you shop, you can look for products packaged in plastics that you can recycle. It's important to remember that plastic caps and lids are not accepted in most curbside bins. Aveda Salons and Spas now offer a program to recycle many types of rigid plastic lids. You can learn more at Aveda.com/caps.

It Makes Cents: Throwing aluminum cans in the trash is about like throwing money out the window. Recycled aluminum is turned into new cans in less than 90 days and it can be recycled over and over again. It takes 95 percent less energy to make a can from recycled materials and produces 97 percent less water pollution. So choose beverages in aluminum and recycle every can.

Speak With Your Wallet: Filling your curbside-recycling bin is just the beginning. Complete the circle by seeking out products made from recycled content—especially post-consumer content. That's the materials you and I recycle and not the scraps on factory floors.

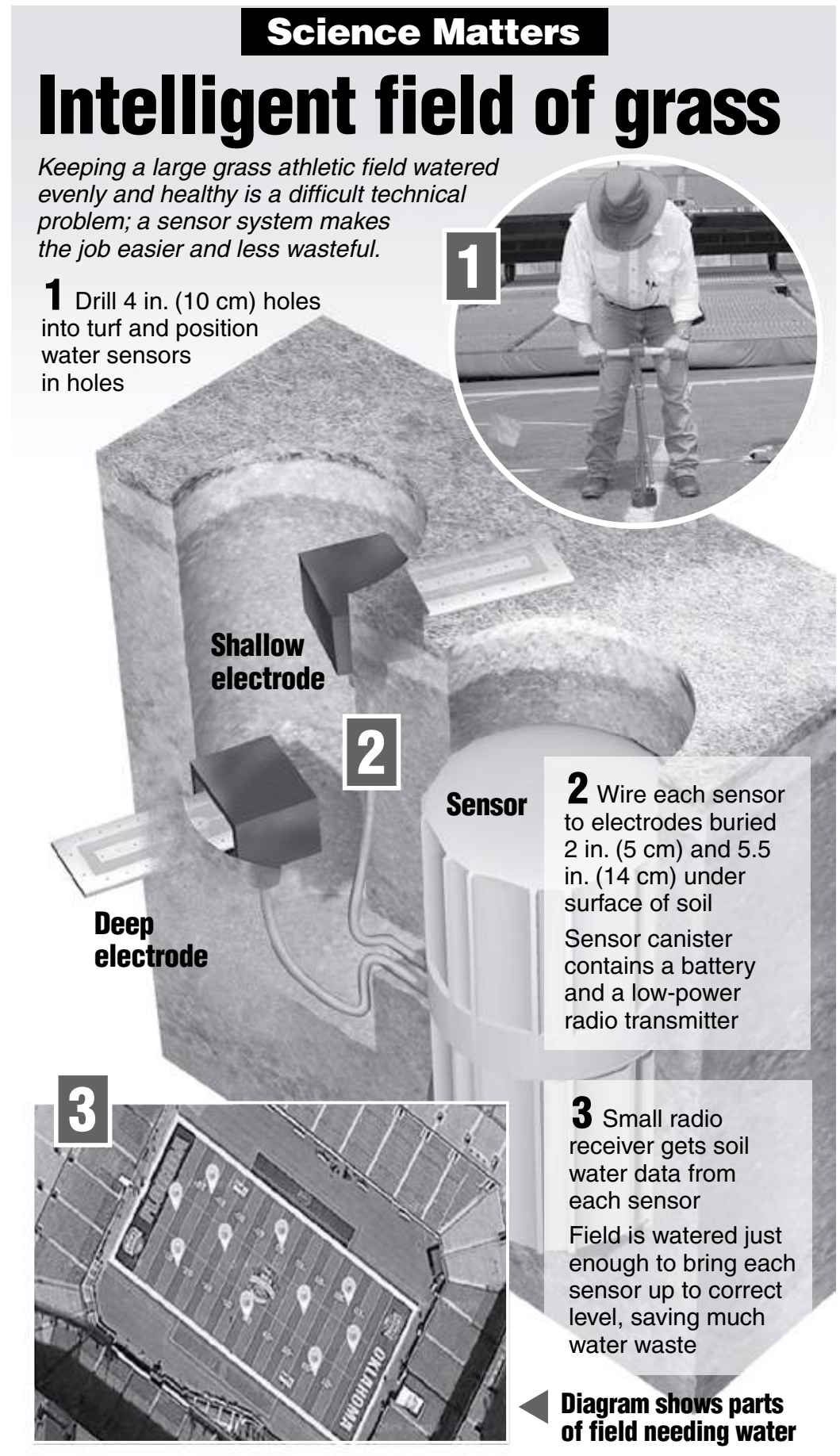
Recycling is rewarding. And, if you can make it easier on everyone in your home, it won't be a chore to Do Your Part as you keep even more recyclables out of our landfills.

For more information: www.DoYourPart.com.

Science Matters

Intelligent field of grass

Keeping a large grass athletic field watered evenly and healthy is a difficult technical problem; a sensor system makes the job easier and less wasteful.


1
1 Drill 4 in. (10 cm) holes into turf and position water sensors in holes
Shallow electrode
2
Sensor
Deep electrode
2 Wire each sensor to electrodes buried 2 in. (5 cm) and 5.5 in. (14 cm) under surface of soil
Sensor canister contains a battery and a low-power radio transmitter
3
3 Small radio receiver gets soil water data from each sensor
Field is watered just enough to bring each sensor up to correct level, saving much water waste
Diagram shows parts of field needing water

Source: Advanced Sensor Technology, Land Shark Stadium (Florida)
Graphic: Cindy Jones-Hulfachor, Sun Sentinel

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Life & Style

AP

This Oct. 23, 2009, file photo provided courtesy of the Food Network shows, from left, chef Bobby Flay, White House chef Cristeta Comerford, Alton Brown, first lady Michelle Obama, chef Mario Batali and chef Emeril Lagasse in front of the South Portico of the White House in Washington.

Obamas invite famous guest chefs to White House

By CARYN ROUSSEAU
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

Since bringing their well-documented high-end appetites to the White House, President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama have broken new gourmet ground by inviting in a steady stream of the nation's top culinary talents.

It's an experience the chefs say they consider a career achievement.

"You work in the White House and you walk over to the tent and right across to your right, there is the Oval Office," said chef Marcus Samuelsson, who prepared the Obama's first state dinner in November in honor of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

"That's not something that happens every day," Samuelsson said.

Carl Anthony, historian with the National First Ladies Library, said that while inviting guest chefs to the White House isn't unheard of, featuring such famous chefs is new. Anthony sees Michelle Obama using the chefs "to bring attention to the issue of nutrition, especially childhood nutrition."

In fact, Michelle Obama recently appeared on the Food Network special "Super Chef Battle," highlighting her White House garden and talking about it as a way to teach local children about healthy eating. Obama told the show's famous chefs, "We really want you all to be a part of helping us spread that message."

Former White House executive chef Walter Scheib, who cooked under presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, said there's no protocol on guest chefs and the Obamas can invite as many as they like.

Scheib said what it means to be a chef today has changed, and the Obamas and White House are reflecting that. He compared chefs cooking for the Obamas to other artists putting on performances elsewhere in the White House.

"When they do their performance it isn't on a stage in the East Room," Scheib said. "It's in the kitchen."

Koren Grieveson, chef at the Chicago restaurant avec, made zucchini onion quesadillas for a healthy kids fair at the White House in October. She described it as an intimidating but beautiful place.

"It's just really surreal when you're on the White House lawn, escorted by Secret Service and trying to concentrate on what you're supposed to do," Grieveson said. "But at the same time it was an honor. It was so much fun."

Celebrity chef Bobby Flay grilled steaks with President Obama last summer and called the experience "probably my greatest professional moment."

"I could feel him walking over to me as my grills were being lit," Flay said recently. "Thirty seconds into it he made me feel like he and I had known each other for a long time."

White House executive chef Cristeta Comerford says she appreciates the talented chefs who visit her kitchen and thinks the exchange makes for good meals.

"Their different style and their repertoire, it's really good to see that," Comerford said. "Seeing the way they work, the message and technique they offer, it's really a great thing for us."

However, former White House executive pastry chef Roland Mesnier said he would feel slighted by guest chefs, who could use their White House experience as a promotional tool or for exposure.

"To me it's a slap in the face. It's an insult," he said.

The Obamas took the trend to television in January when "Super Chef Battle" visited the White House. Comerford paired with Flay to win a battle over the team of chefs Emeril Lagasse and Mario Batali on the program.

While Comerford has been more visible, the position of White House chef has been largely unknown in the past, Scheib said.

"You just don't exist for all intents and purposes," Scheib said. "You are the most famous anonymous chef on Earth. Everybody talks about it, but nobody really knows about it."

With that changing, other chefs have been invited as well.

Last June, famed Hawaii chef Alan Wong prepared traditional luau foods like kalua pig and lomi lomi salmon for the annual picnic for members of Congress and their families. When the Obamas celebrated Hispanic music in October, they invited renowned Latin American chef Maricel Presilla to work with the White House kitchen staff.

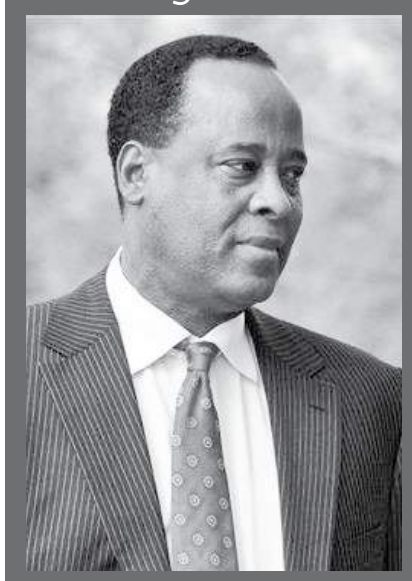
Chefs and the food industry will benefit from the Obamas' interest in food and their efforts to dine at different restaurants, says Samuelsson, whose largely vegetarian state dinner made use of herbs harvested from the White House garden.

"I just think it says a lot about the curiosity and the diversity of the restaurants and the chefs that they are inviting in," he said.

Todd Gray, chef and co-owner of Washington's Equinox Restaurant, made trail mix with popcorn, peanuts and cranberries with Parmesan cheese and brown sugar at the October children's health fair. Gray said guest chefs are well taken care of when they cook at the White House.

"The care that they take when they bring you in is nothing less than stellar," Gray says. "There's always plenty of people to help to make sure your needs are being met."

AP Source: Michael Jackson doctor to be charged in court



AP

In this Nov. 23, 2009 file picture, Dr. Conrad Murray arrives at his clinic in Houston.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Prosecutors investigating Michael Jackson's death plan to file a criminal complaint charging the singer's doctor with involuntary manslaughter rather than seek a grand jury indictment, The Associated Press learned Tuesday, a strategy shift that will give an eager public an earlier look at evidence.

While there is no public timetable for charges to be filed against Dr. Conrad Murray, there are strong indications the move is imminent. Murray and lawyer Edward Chernoff have traveled to Los Angeles from Houston, where Murray practices, and the attorney said his client is prepared to turn himself in.

"If they tell him to surrender in 10 minutes, he'll go surrender," said Chernoff, who spent several hours meeting with other members of Murray's defense team Tuesday. "He's never hidden, he's always been available."

David Walgren, the deputy Los Angeles County district attorney handling the case, declined to comment.

Jackson, 50, hired Murray to be his personal physician as he prepared for a strenuous series of comeback performances in London. His stunning death on June 25 in Los Angeles came after Murray, tending to Jackson in the star's rented mansion, administered the powerful anesthetic propofol and two other sedatives to get the chronic insomniac to sleep, according to the Los Angeles County coroner's office, which ruled the death a homicide.

Propofol is only supposed to be administered by an anesthesia professional in a medical setting. The patient requires constant monitoring because the drug depresses breathing and heart rate while also lowering blood pressure, a potentially deadly combination.

Murray has maintained from the outset that nothing he gave the singer should have killed him. It wasn't illegal for him to administer propofol to Jackson, though whether he followed proper procedures while Jackson was under the influence of the drugs is a key part of the case.

To bring a manslaughter charge, prosecutors must show there was a reckless action that created a risk of death or great bodily injury. If a doctor is aware of the risk, there might also be an issue of whether the patient knew that risk and decided to take it.

Los Angeles Police Department investigators spent months gathering evidence, with detectives talking to numerous medical experts to determine whether Murray's behavior, which included talking on his cell phone and leaving Jackson's bedside, fell outside the bounds of reasonable medical practice.

Last month, a law enforcement official told the AP that prosecutors had decided to seek a grand jury indictment on an involuntary manslaughter charge. On Tuesday, a second law enforcement official said prosecutors were sticking with the charge but planned to file a criminal complaint to avoid the appearance of secrecy in the closely watched case.

Both officials requested anonymity because they are not authorized to publicly discuss the case.

Grand jury proceedings are secret. A panel meets, hears evidence and then decides whether to return an indictment. A criminal complaint is a prelude to a public hearing where a judge would weigh testimony from witnesses to decide if there is probable cause to bring a case to trial.

Legal experts debated the reason for the change of strategy.

"It appears they are not too concerned about the dangers of publicity," said Stan Goldman, criminal law professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. "Maybe they even like the idea."

Mark Geragos, a private criminal defense attorney who has represented a string of high-profile clients, including Jackson, said the decision suggests prosecutors are unsure they could persuade a grand jury that Murray was criminally liable for Jackson's death.

"This may be one of those rare cases where a grand jury of citizens is not ready to attach criminal liability to the doctor," Geragos said. "They may feel they are better off in front of a judge."

Harland Braun, a celebrity defense attorney who also has represented doctors in court, disagreed, saying the move shows prosecutors are confident their evidence and witnesses could withstand cross-examination and public scrutiny.

"It's really a test run on a case," Braun said. "Both sides get to know what the strengths and weaknesses of the case are."

BEST PICTURE NOMINEES

Up In The Air

The Blind Side

Inglorious Basterds

District 9

An Education

Up

The Hunt Locker

Precious

Avatar

A Serious Man

Oscars go big & small with 'Avatar,' 'Hurt Locker'

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP MOVIE WRITER

BEVERLY HILLS, California (AP)—"Avatar" is a dreamy space fantasy that has made more money than any movie in history. "The Hurt Locker" is a ground-level dose of Iraq war reality and one of the lowest-grossing best-picture contenders ever.

With a leading nine Oscar nominations each and ex-spouses James Cameron and Kathryn Bigelow as directors, the films are a study in extremes. They're also the only two movies that really matter in the expanded race for Hollywood's top prize March 7.

"Avatar," about the human invasion of a faraway moon populated by blue-hued creatures, won best drama and director at the Golden Globes. "The Hurt Locker," a disturbingly close and claustrophobic look at the strains of disabling bombs in Iraq, earned the top prizes from guilds representing directors and producers, and was chosen as the year's best film by many key critics groups.

"It's a true David and Goliath kind of story, isn't it?" said Jeremy Renner, a best-actor nominee for his performance as a bomb-disposal expert in "The Hurt Locker." ''You know what? I love being David. ... It's like 'The Bad News Bears' or something, or Rocky Balboa."

In between the two films in the Academy Award best-picture nominations announced Tuesday is a range of mainstream hits and critical darlings that deliver just what Oscar overseers wanted when they expanded the category from five films to 10—something for everyone.

"Extraordinary company. Every film is a masterpiece in and of itself," said Bigelow, whose best-director nod for "The Hurt Locker" makes her the fourth woman ever nominated in that category. "It creates a lot to choose from, let's put it that way."

Despite the head-to-head awards rivalry between Bigelow and Cameron, who were married from 1989 to 1991, they don't seem to share any animosity.

"Frankly, I thought Kathryn was going to get this. She richly deserves it," Cameron said last month as he accepted his Golden Globe.

Along with Cameron's behemoth "Avatar," which has surpassed his own "Titanic" as the biggest modern blockbuster at the box office, four other huge hits earned best-picture nominations: the animated comedy "Up," the football drama "The Blind Side," the World War II saga "Inglourious Basterds" and the science-fiction tale "District 9."

Two other nominees, the recession tale "Up in the Air" and the Harlem drama "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' By Sapphire," have been solid moneymakers.

Then there's "The Hurt Locker," the teen drama "An Education" and the offbeat academia story "A Serious Man," little arthouse triumphs whose domestic grosses—ranging from $9 million to $12.7 million—amount to popcorn money compared with the $600 million in the U.S. and more than $2 billion-plus worldwide "Avatar" has made.

"What a great day for film when you have the biggest film ever made in the same grouping as a little film like 'Precious.' And 'Hurt Locker.' And how fantastic I think that is for this environment," said Sarah Siegel-Magness, a producer on "Precious."

Nominees for best foreign language film included Germany's "The White Ribbon," the likely front-runner after taking the same prize at the Golden Globes and top honors at last May's Cannes Film Festival. Also nominated were the Cannes runner-up, France's "A Prophet," and Israel's "Ajami," Argentina's "The Secret in Their Eyes" and Peru's "The Milk of Sorrow."

Diversity rules the directing category, traditionally a white men's club. Bigelow has a good shot to become the first woman to win the directing Oscar, while "Precious" filmmaker Lee Daniels is only the second black director ever nominated.

"It's always the first black something-or-other," Daniels said. "After 82 years, it's the first film nominated for best picture directed by an African-American. Isn't that great? It's so exciting. How can you lose? You can't lose!"

Along with Bigelow, Daniels and Cameron—whose "Titanic" won 11 Oscars, including picture and director—the directing nominees are Jason Reitman for "Up in the Air" and Quentin Tarantino for "Inglourious Basterds."

Acting nominees include the four stars who have emerged as favorites from previous awards shows: lead players Sandra Bullock for "The Blind Side" and Jeff Bridges for the country-music tale "Crazy Heart" and supporting performers Mo'Nique for "Precious" and Austrian Christoph Waltz for "Inglourious Basterds."

More best-picture choices this time means more types of films in the awards spotlight, said Bullock, who scored her first Oscar nomination as a wealthy woman who takes in a homeless teen who goes on to National Football League stardom.

She said expanding the nominees means more types of films, from blockbusters to small independents, have a chance.

"It's so right and timely, and I'm so happy about it, because I think it's going to excite filmmakers even more now to just do the types of films they want to make without worrying about fitting it into this mold that would get recognition," she said.

Bullock is up against past Oscar winners Meryl Streep, as chef Julia Child in "Julie & Julia," and Britain's Helen Mirren, as Leo Tolstoy's bullheaded wife in "The Last Station." Carey Mulligan, as a British teen involved with an older man in "An Education," and Gabourey Sidibe, as a Harlem teen overcoming horrible abuse and neglect in "Precious," are first-time nominees.

It was the 16th nomination for Streep, extending her lead in the Oscar record book for acting nominees. Katharine Hepburn and Jack Nicholson are tied for second-place with 12 each.

Bridges, who has been nominated four times without winning, is viewed as the man to beat this time for his role as a boozy country singer trying to clean up his act in "Crazy Heart."

Joining Bridges and Renner in the best-actor lineup are past Oscar winners George Clooney, as a frequent-flier junkie in "Up in the Air," and Morgan Freeman, as South African leader Nelson Mandela in "Invictus," along with Britain's Colin Firth, as a grieving gay academic in "A Single Man."

While "Star Trek" was snubbed for a best-picture nomination, "Avatar" and "District 9" brought Oscar respectability to a genre often overlooked during Hollywood's prestige season. Only two science-fiction films—"Star Wars" and "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial"—previously had been nominated for best picture.

Doubling the best-picture field also opened the door for animation, which has its own Oscar category. "Up" is the front-runner to win for feature animation, but it gains added luster as only the second animated film competing for best picture, following 1991's "Beauty and the Beast."

"The whole reason the Oscars exist, they've made no secret of it, is to get people excited about movies. The fact we're talking about 10 instead of five, I guess it's working," said "Up" director Pete Docter. "To be included on that list is just humbling and amazing."

Ten nominees, even as many as 12, were common for the Oscars through 1943, but the best-picture competition was reduced to five films after that. The bosses at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences liked what they got for this first year with the revived top-10 format.

"What the voters have done for us is they've given us a little bit of everything you could ask for," said Tom Sherak, academy president. "I guess the only thing that wasn't in there was a foreign picture, which would have been nice also as a best picture, too. But other than that, I think they gave us the kind of sample of the movies that came out last year that they loved and that made some kind of impact on them."

OSCAR 2010 nominations

The 82st annual Academy Awards will be presented March 7. Nominees in major categories:

Best actor
- Jeff Bridges, "Crazy Heart"
- George Clooney, "Up in the Air"
- Colin Firth, "A Single Man"
- Morgan Freeman, "Invictus"
- Jeremy Renner, "The Hurt Locker"

Best actress
- Sandra Bullock, "The Blind Side"
- Helen Mirren, "The Last Station"
- Carey Mulligan, "An Education"
- Gabourey Sidibe, "Precious"
- Meryl Streep, "Julie & Julia"

Best picture
- "Avatar"
- "The Blind Side"
- "District 9"
- "An Education"
- "The Hurt Locker"
- "Inglourious Basterds"
- "Precious"
- "A Serious Man"
- "Up"
- "Up in the Air"

Best supporting actor
- Matt Damon, "Invictus"
- Woody Harrelson, "The Messenger"
- Christopher Plummer, "The Last Station"
- Stanley Tucci, "The Lovely Bones"
- Christoph Waltz, "Inglourious Basterds"

Best supporting actress
- Penelope Cruz, "Nine"
- Vera Farmiga, "Up in the Air"
- Maggie Gyllenhaal, "Crazy Heart"
- Anna Kendrick, "Up in the Air"
- Mo'Nique, "Precious"

Best director
- Kathryn Bigelow, "The Hurt Locker"
- James Cameron, "Avatar"
- Lee Daniels, "Precious"
- Quentin Tarantino, "Inglourious Basterds"
- Jason Reitman, "Up in the Air"

Best foreign language film
- "Ajami," Israel
- "El Secreto de Sus Ojos," Argentina
- "The Milk of Sorrow," Peru
- "Un Prophete," France
- "The White Ribbon," Germany

Best animated film
- "Coraline"
- "Fantastic Mr. Fox"
- "The Princess and the Frog"
- "The Secret of Kells"
- "Up"

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Source: Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
Graphic: Pat Carr

Bridges, Bullock tabbed as early Oscar favorites

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Jeff Bridges and Sandra Bullock are early favorites to win Oscars in the top acting categories at the Academy Awards, oddsmakers said Tuesday.

"Avatar" is considered the favorite among 10 nominees for best picture.

John Avello, executive director of the race and sports book at the Wynn Las Vegas casino, tabbed Bridges as a 2-3 favorite to win best actor for his role in "Crazy Heart."

Avello has Bullock at even-money for best actress for "The Blind Side" but said he was surprised the football drama was nominated for best picture.

Bridges

Bullock

"I was blindsided by 'Blind Side,' and I'm up in the air about the others," he said.

Benjamin Eckstein, president of syndicated newspaper odds column America's Line, listed "Avatar" as a 1-2 favorite for best picture with "The Hurt Locker" an even money contender.

The 1-2 odds for "Avatar" mean that a bettor would hypothetically need to gamble $2 to win $1. But the odds are just for fun, because Nevada casinos don't take wagers on contests where the outcome is known beforehand.

Ladbrokes, a British company that accepts bets online, lists Mo'Nique of "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' By Sapphire" and Christoph Waltz of "Inglourious Basterds" as heavy 1-8 favorites to win for their supporting roles.

Eckstein, who listed Waltz and Mo'Nique as an even heavier favorites than Ladbrokes, said the nominees are overwhelmingly ahead of their competition.

"There are just certain years where it's so overwhelming you just put it on their seat," Eckstein said. "There's no contest, just give the Oscar out."

Eckstein said he thought races would be closer for best actress—where past Oscar winner Meryl Streep is nominated as chef Julia Child in "Julie & Julia"—and best picture.

Bookmakers picked Kathryn Bigelow as the favorite to win the best director Oscar for "The Hurt Locker."

BULLOCK VS STREEP

A playful awards-season feud

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Sandra Bullock may be the front-runner for the best-actress Oscar, but for her, awards season is more about camaraderie than competition with her fellow nominees. Except Meryl Streep.

"With Meryl, when this whole thing started, I left her a voice mail going, 'You've got to watch your back. I'm gonna cut you. I'm gonna take you down,'" Bullock said with a laugh Tuesday after learning she and Streep were both nominated for Academy Awards. "And then she sent me dead orchids and told me to die, so I sent her a case of liquor and told her to toast to white trash."

Bullock—who kissed Streep on the lips when the two friends tied for best actress at the Critics' Choice Awards—said the best thing about collecting repeated accolades for her role in "The Blind Side" has been getting to know the other actresses she has been nominated with for the past month or more.

"You have to enjoy being with these women that you admire or love or like or have had friendships with or are just getting to know because you've got to take care of each other," Bullock said.

"No one, at least the people that I've met, no one cares about the end result or the statue," she said. "It's being able to sit in close proximity with these ladies ... and we have to go through this whole rigamarole and we just all look at each other and we get to know each other and you laugh at the absurdity of it all and how they pit women up against each other."

Despite becoming an Oscar nominee, the 45-year-old actress remains grounded. While speaking with a reporter about the Oscar nod, Bullock could be overheard telling her young stepdaughter, "I'll do your hair when I finish this."

"On one hand, it's a huge moment," Bullock said. "And on the other hand, you have to put your feet on the ground and get out of bed and do the things you always do."

The Academy Awards will be presented at the Kodak Theatre on March 7 and broadcast live on ABC.

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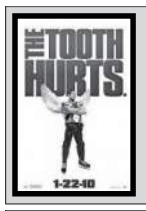
Sunday	1:20	4:10	7:30	
Mon thru Thurs		4:10	7:30	

Mel Gibson, Ray Winstone
Mystery • Rated R

Synopsis

Casino Royale's Martin Campbell returns to familiar territory with this adaptation of his own 1985 BBC miniseries -- a mystery starring Mel Gibson as a detective looking into his political-activist daughter's death and uncovering layers of governmental conspiracies in the process. William Monahan (The Departed) provides the screenplay for the GK Films production, co-starring Ray Winstone and Danny Huston.



The Tooth Fairy

Friday		4:00	7:00	9:45
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:45
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Mon thru Thurs		4:00	7:00	

Dwayne Johnson, Ashley Judd
Comedy Drama • Rated PG

Synopsis

20th Century Fox presents this family comedy following a star hockey player's (Dwayne Johnson) temporary transformation into a full-fledged tooth fairy as penalty for discouraging a young fan. Director Michael Lembeck (The Santa Clause 2 and 3) helms the family comedy, based on a screenplay by veteran comedic writers Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, with additional writing provided by Joshua Sternin and Jeffrey Ventimilia. Ashley Judd and Julie Andrews co-star in the Blumhouse and Mayhem Pictures production.

I Love You, Goodbye

Friday		4:05	7:05	9:55
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:05	9:55
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05	
Mon thru Thurs		4:05	7:05	

Derek Ramsay, Angelica Panganiban
Romance, Drama • Rated NR

Synopsis

Gary (Derek Ramsay) and Lizelle (Angelica Panganiban) are lovers for 4 years. One day in the search for a better life and future they decide to work together in a cruise ship and both attend an interview test on the ship. During the test both are required to jump into the sea with Lizelle getting scared and failing the test, making her ineligible to work on the cruise ship. Gary then proceeds to work on the cruise ship leaving Lizelle behind without saying goodbye to her. Gary's unexpected departure makes Lizelle really sad and this also marks the end of their relationship.

The Book of Eli

Friday		4:20	7:10	9:40
Saturday	1:30	4:20	7:10	9:40
Sunday	1:30	4:20	7:10	
Mon thru Thurs		4:20	7:10	

Denzel Washington, Gary Oldman
Action • Rated R

The Spy Next Door

Friday		4:30	7:20	9:35
Saturday	1:10	4:30	7:20	9:35
Sunday	1:10	4:30	7:20	
Mon thru Thurs		4:30	7:20	

Jackie Chan, George Lopez
Comedy • Rated PG

Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Sqeakquel

Friday		4:15	7:25	9:30
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:25	9:30
Sunday	1:15	4:15	7:25	
Mon thru Thurs		4:15	7:25	

Justin Long, Matthew Gray Gubler
Children, Family • Rated PG

Avatar

Friday		3:55	6:55	10:00
Saturday	12:50	3:55	6:55	10:00
Sunday	12:50	3:55	6:55	
Mon thru Thurs		3:55	6:55	

Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana
Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

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NOMINATION REACTIONS

"This is my fifth nomination and I'm more proud of that than all the rest of it, I think. Getting nominated, to me, that's the plateau. After you're nominated, it's like a crapshoot, it's like throwing dice."

—Morgan Freeman, best actor nominee for "Invictus."

"It was a phone call that interrupted a wonderful night's sleep that I was having. It was the phone call. It was the phone call that you always hear people saying, 'I was awoken by the ring of the phone' and that's exactly what happened with me."

—Sandra Bullock on how she learned of her first Oscar nomination, for best actress for "The Blind Side."

"As soon as I heard, I jumped up and down and for some reason I kept screaming, 'I'm gonna get a car, I'm gonna get a car.' I don't know why."

—Gabourey Sidibe, best actress nominee for "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire."

"I thought I was managing my expectations, but on hearing the news I discovered new and unfamiliar vocal tones. Perhaps I should do another musical."

—Colin Firth, best actor nominee for "A Single Man." (His film credits include the musical "Mamma Mia!")

"I'm just going to carry on with my life and be thankful and that's it. My celebration days, which were huge, are now slightly modified, shall we say. At my exalted age I can't quite do the old 24-hour nightly shifts that I used to."

—Christopher Plummer, age 80, on receiving his first Academy Award nomination, for best supporting actor, for his portrayal of Leo Tolstoy in "The Last Station."

"I'm very happy and honored for Christopher, myself and our film. I think Tolstoy himself would have been perplexed by all this, but Sofya, his wife, would have been over the moon. So in that spirit, I am, too."

—Helen Mirren, nominated for best actress for her role as Tolstoy's wife in "The Last Station."

"I certainly, if one can give the impression that the impossible is possible, then I am perhaps overwhelmed with joy. But I do think that I hope someday we can lose the modifier and that becomes a moot point whether the person is male or female and they're just filmmakers making statements that they believe in."

—Kathryn Bigelow on becoming only the fourth woman nominated for a best director award, for "The Hurt Locker."

"After 82 years, it's the first film nominated for best picture directed by an African American. Isn't that great? It's so exciting. How can you lose? You can't lose!"

—Lee Daniels, best director nominee for "Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire."

"I can't crack champagne because I've been cracking champagne throughout all these awards ceremonies and I'm on this psychotic diet, so I'll celebrate in the gym. It is an Oscar diet. I gotta fit ... in that tux."

—Daniels, on his plans to celebrate becoming only the second black director nominated for an Academy Award.

"It was like a really good, friendly punch in the stomach. It's a good feeling, but it's like a jolt. You can be in as many top-five lists and have as many people say things to you on red carpets as you like, and it doesn't for a single second make you honestly think that you're going to get nominated."

—Carey Mulligan, best actress nominee for "An Education."

"It's been a bit of a ride for this film. It started as a small-budget indie film and now it's standing shoulder to shoulder with 'Avatar.' It's a victory for small films and I'm delighted.

—Barry Ackroyd, best cinematography nominee for "The Hurt Locker."

"Maybe with the nomination, people will have a chance to understand what a Palestinian living in Israel is. It will put us on the map."

—Scandar Copti, one of the two directors of "Ajami," nominated for best foreign language film.

"I'm so grateful to Marion Cotillard for doing such a beautiful job with that song. It's a very special honor to be singled out by the Academy and the world of film and my first foray into that world."

—Tony-winning Broadway composer Maury Yeston on his first Oscar nomination, for best original song, for "Take It All," from "Nine."

"It's nice to be taken seriously."

—Henry Selick, director of "Coraline," nominated for best animated feature film.

John Mayer puts on free concert for SC fans

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—John Mayer fans have been huddling outside the South Carolina venue where the rocker has been rehearsing for his upcoming tour, hoping to get a glimpse of him.

For some lucky fans, that wait has paid off. For two hours Tuesday night, Mayer put on a free show for University of South Carolina students, giving back to the loyal fans who have camped out in downtown Columbia during his practice sessions.

"USC students: come watch us run the show tonight. Free," Mayer said in a Twitter message sent at 6 p.m. Tuesday, inviting students to pick up their free tickets at the Russell House student union on campus and show up for a concert two hours later.

Organizers originally said only 200 tickets would be issued, but about 500 were gathered for Tuesday's performance.

Mayer has been in Columbia this week rehearsing for his two-year worldwide tour, which kicks off Thursday in Sunrise, Fla. He returns to South Carolina Feb. 8 for a show in North Charleston but doesn't have any concerts scheduled for Columbia.

Given the warm reception he got Tuesday, Mayer said he might have to reconsider that.

"We will hopefully see you at one of the area concerts, or we'll have to do a show back here," Mayer said. "We'll see you soon."

Tuesday's performance had all the elements of a standard arena concert: screaming fans, cameras feeding live images to a jumbo screen, even an encore. Trying out music from his latest album, "Battle Studies," Mayer told the crowd he planned to run through the touring concert playlist and make tweaks as necessary, even asking the crowd for advice on some show elements, like a semitransparent screen surrounding the stage.

"Thank you for helping us

OSCAR ODDS AND ENDS

IN RARE AIR: "Up" is only the second animated feature film to receive an Oscar nomination for best picture. "Beauty and the Beast" was the first, nominated in 1991.

A BIG WIN BREWING?: Kathryn Bigelow ("The Hurt Locker,") is just the fourth woman to be nominated for a best director Oscar and only the second American woman to receive the nod. The other, Sofia Coppola, was nominated in 2003. If Bigelow wins she would be the first woman to receive the award.

PROTECTING HER LEAD: Meryl Streep remains Oscar's most nominated performer, with this year's best-actress nod for portraying Julia Child in "Julie & Julia" bringing her total to 16. That's four ahead of Katharine Hepburn and Jack Nicholson, who have 12 nominations apiece. But Hepburn, who died in 2003, still leads Oscar winners with four statuettes. Nicholson has three and Streep has two.

BACK IN BLACK (AND WHITE): "The White Ribbon" becomes only the ninth predominantly black-and-white movie to be nominated for a best cinematography Oscar since the Academy eliminated the separate black-and-white cinematography category in 1967. It joins "The Man Who Wasn't There" and "Good Night, and Good Luck" as the only ones since 2000.

BEST AND WORST: By the time Sandra Bullock learns whether she's won a best actress Oscar for her role in "The Blind Side," she'll also know whether she has received a Razzie for worst actress in another movie this year, "All About Steve." But whether she receives two trophies or one or none, Bullock can take solace in the fact her best and worst reviews didn't come for the same film, something that is unusual but not unprecedented. James Coco was nominated for an Oscar and a Razzie for his role in 1981's "Only When I Laugh" and so was Amy Irving for her part in 1983's "Yentl."

BIGGER, MUCH BIGGER: The expansion of the best picture nominee category to 10 films was seen as a way to get more mainstream movies popular with the general public into the running. By a sheer dollars-and-sense definition, the move appears to have been a success. Last year's five best picture nominees had grossed $185 million at the domestic box office by the time their nominations were announced. This year's 10 nominees have raked in $1.5 billion. Of course nearly $600 million of that comes from the blockbuster "Avatar." But four other nominees have also cracked the $100 million earnings mark. Of last year's five nominees, only one did, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button." ***(The Associated Press)***

Songwriter Brooks makes $1.25M bail in NY sex case

NEW YORK (AP)—"You Light Up My Life" tunesmith Joseph Brooks is staying free while fighting charges of molesting a string of would-be actresses in his Manhattan apartment.

Defense lawyer Jeffrey Hoffman said Tuesday that the Academy Award-winning songwriter sold stock to come up with $1.25 million cash bail.

Brooks' bail was raised from $250,000 after prosecutors increased the charges against him last month.

The 71-year-old Brooks has pleaded not guilty to predatory sexual assault and other charges.

He's accused of forcing himself on 13 women. Prosecutors say many of the women had answered Brooks' ads offering auditions for movie roles.

Brooks won an Oscar for best original song for "You Light Up My Life" in 1977.

LA judge sends Ryan O'Neal's son back to rehab

O'Neal

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A judge in Los Angeles is sending the troubled son of Ryan O'Neal and the late Farrah Fawcett back to rehab after more than a month in jail.

The judge placed Redmond O'Neal back on probation and sentenced to an intense residential rehab program during a brief hearing Thursday. The 25-year-old has been jailed since Dec. 29 for violating his probation on a previous drug conviction.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Michael Tynan says if O'Neal succeeds at the rehab program, he will then be sent to a sober-living facility. He may eventually be granted passes to leave, but Tynan says the program will be "justifiably" severe.

O'Neal's attorney, Richard Pintal, says his client has made considerable progress while in jail and has earned another chance at rehab.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Usher, Shakira, Keys to perform at All-Star game

NEW YORK (AP)—The Grammy winners are all set to perform during the NBA All-Star game on Feb. 14. Shakira will perform two songs from her latest CD, "She Wolf"; Keys will perform new and old hits. The divas will go on during the halftime show. Usher will sing a new song, the dance jam "More," during the introductions of the National Basketball Association all-stars. The tune is from his upcoming album, "Raymond v. Raymond." The game, which will take place at the Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas, will go on before the largest crowd ever to attend a basketball game, according to a statement from the NBA.

Former 'Boston Legal' actor dies in US crash

DODGEVILLE, Wisconsin (AP)—An actor who appeared on the TV show "Boston Legal" has been killed in an automobile crash in Wisconsin. The Iowa County Sheriff's Department says Justin Mentell was killed when his Sports Utility Vehicle went down an embankment and hit two trees. The crash was reported Monday. The sheriff's department says the 27-year-old from Illinois, wasn't wearing a seat belt. Mentell portrayed attorney Garrett Wells on "Boston Legal" from 2005 to 2006. According to the film database IMDb.com, he also was Terrell in the 2009 Disney movie "G-Force." The Web site says Mentell was a former member of the U.S. Junior National Speedskating team. A message left with his agent wasn't immediately returned Tuesday.

Newton asks for Indian tribal recognition

RICHMOND, Virginia (AP)—"Mr. Las Vegas" Wayne Newton is asking legislators in his home state of Virginia to grant state recognition to his Indian tribe. The entertainer appealed Tuesday to the House Rules Committee to officially recognize the Patawomeck, or Potomac, tribe, of which he is a member. Committee members voted unanimously in favor of the recognition, which has been given to eight Virginia tribes. The recognition allows the group to be known as a tribe but does not grant sovereignty. Newton and Patawomeck Chief Robert Green said it would validate their identity and help them protect sacred burial grounds. Outside the meeting, women lined up to get autographs and kisses from Newton, who began performing as a child in Virginia before becoming a fixture in Las Vegas.

Tony Bennett paints 2010 Jazz Fest poster

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Grammy-winning jazz crooner Tony Bennett will be part of this year's New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival — but not with his voice. A portrait Bennett painted of his late friend and fellow jazzman Louis Prima is being produced as this year's official Jazz Fest poster. The festival's official poster dates to 1975, when the first one was produced as a fifth anniversary fundraiser for the nonprofit New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Foundation. Many of the early festival posters were abstracts. But more than a decade, most have been portrait-like renderings of such performers as Fats Domino, Professor Longhair, Jerry Lee Lewis, Harry Connick Jr., Pete Fountain and Wynton Marsalis. The poster is sold during Jazz Fest, which runs April 23-25 and April 29-May 2.

Moving to a different school may not cure what ails child

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: You missed an important clue in the letter from "Must Choose in Maryland" (Nov. 30), who is considering moving to improve her daughter's school life. Abby, the child is only 7. She has been in public school for three years, so the private school where she "flourished" was PRESCHOOL.

Many children encounter problems when school becomes more difficult and grading is involved. Before moving and losing her "great job, wonderful friends and comfortable lifestyle," that mother should try more options.

"Must Choose" should consider having her daughter tested for learning disabilities or physical problems. She needs to work with her daughter's school and teachers, and maybe employ private tutoring or counseling to find methods that improve the way her daughter learns. It's possible that if they move, they will only take their problems with them.

FORMER PRESCHOOL AND PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER

DEAR TEACHER: I appreciate your offering your insight. Many readers pointed out how important it is for this mother to be proactive during any transition in her child's life. Read on:

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Most children are successful in school at age 4. Before uprooting her family, "Must Choose" should meet with the school's principal and teachers to determine exactly why her daughter "hates" school.

What criteria, other than her daughter's feelings, is she using as an indicator that the schools are awful? Test data, facilities, community support, teacher qualifications, etc. should be reviewed. Moving won't ensure a successful educational experience for her daughter. Understanding and dealing with what's at the root of the child's failure will.

CAROL IN TEXAS

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: "Must Choose" needs to examine her daughter's situation more carefully. In preschool, children generally learn social skills, with some introduction to letters and numbers. From kindergarten to second grade, classroom instruction in mathematical and reading skills carry expectations of mastery.

Comparing the enthusiasm and success of preschool to grade school achievements is like comparing apples to oranges. Her daughter may be exhibiting signs of learning disabilities much before second grade because children develop at different rates. It is when they begin to learn to read and do mathematical computations that these difficulties are recognized.

I encourage this mother to talk with her daughter's teacher. She may find an ally there who is as invested in her daughter's social and academic success as she is—and not an enemy.

JENNI IN WARRENTON, MO.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: If "Must Choose" keeps moving, a new group of educators will have to start from scratch to evaluate the issues. As a public school teacher in a diverse district, I often see parents run from the school rather than work to help their children succeed. That mother needs to work with the professional educators in her district to get to the bottom of her child's problems.

OHIO TEACHER

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: "Public" education should not automatically translate to "substandard." Good teachers in public or private schools encourage and support students at multiple stages of development.

"Must Choose" should spend time in her daughter's classroom to observe, volunteer and ask questions. If there's a problem, intervention needs to happen sooner rather than later. Open, honest and constructive feedback directed toward a solution is in order.

EDUCATIONAL SOAPBOX, U.S.A.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

WELL, HOBBES, I GUESS WE LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON FROM THIS DUPLICATING MESS.
AND THAT IS?
AND THAT IS, UM...IT'S THAT, WELL...
OK, SO WE DIDN'T LEARN ANY BIG LESSON. SUE ME.
LIVE AND DON'T LEARN, THAT'S US.
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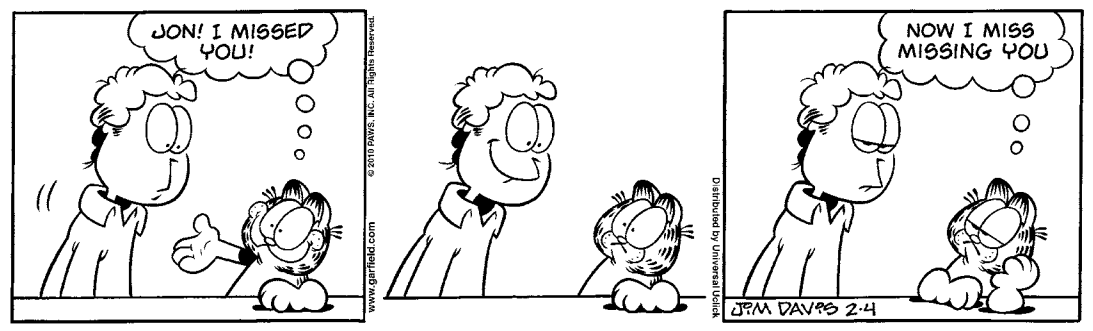
2-4

Garfield®

By Jim Davis


JON! I MISSED YOU!
NOW I MISS MISSING YOU
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www.garfield.com
Distributed by Universal Uclick
JIM DAVIS 2-4

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

OKAY. TIME TO CHECK THE FACEBOOK ACCOUNT. TWO FRIEND REQUESTS...
I AM QUITE CERTAIN I HAVE NO IDEA WHO THESE POTENTIAL "FRIENDS" ARE...
...BUT IF I 'IGNORE' THEM, THEY MAY HATE ME FOREVER.
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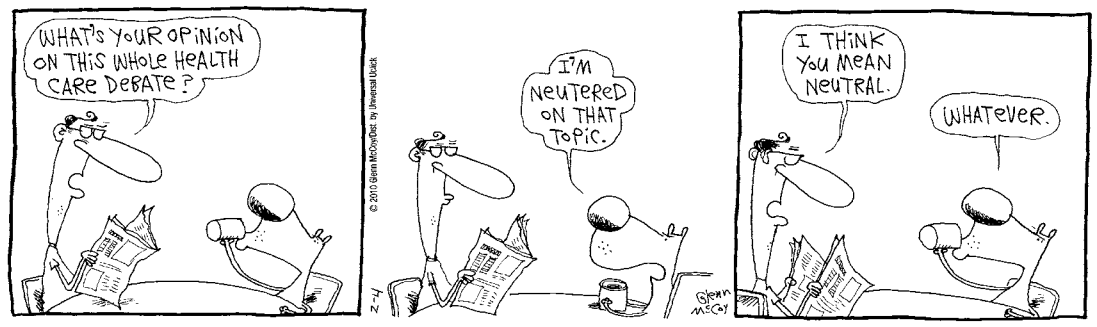
www.gocomics.com
2-4

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


WHAT'S YOUR OPINION ON THIS WHOLE HEALTH CARE DEBATE?
I'M NEUTERED ON THAT TOPIC.
I THINK YOU MEAN NEUTRAL.
WHATEVER.
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2-4

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Kills, "Sopranos" style
5 Mrs. Dithers, in "Blondie"
9 Retainer
12 Lotion additive
13 State with certainty
14 Egos' counterparts
15 Who's there
17 Tear
18 "Oops! I Did It Again" singer
19 Vile
21 "Heavens!"
22 Handed out hands
24 Vitriol
27 By way of
28 Lambs' cries
31 Underwear with underwire
32 Corn spike
33 Sort
34 "Deal or No Deal" choice
36 Hostel
37 Without acting
38 Refrain phrase
40 Indefinite article
41 Kind of point
43 Classify
47 "Eureka!"
48 Backbreaker?
51 Zero
52 Hodgepodge
53 Basso Pinza
54 Scale member
55 Distort
56 Spacecraft compartments

DOWN
1 Lummoxes
2 Buy, fix up and resell
3 Links warning
4 Big Bird's street
5 Urban fleet
6 Eggs
7 In medias —
8 Where the action is
9 Emergency treatment
10 Tend texts
11 Get a glimpse of
16 Give it a go
20 Priest's garment
22 Forest goddess
23 Have coming
24 English channel?
25 401(k) alternative
26 Bartender's pronouncement
27 Bride's cover
29 Every iota
30 Firmament
35 Historic time
37 Foot part
39 Let
40 Fool
41 Bleacherites
42 Ashtabula's state
43 On
44 Rice-shaped pasta
45 Incursion
46 "— company, ..."
49 Carte lead-in
50 Round Table address

Solution time: 25 mins.

A	R	E	A	■	C	I	T	■	I	T	E	M
R	E	A	M	■	R	O	O	■	N	U	D	E
A	N	T	I	M	O	N	Y	■	S	N	A	G
B	O	S	N	I	A	■	E	N	I	G	M	A
■	■	■	O	F	T	■	D	I	P	S	■	■
O	P	P	■	F	I	B	■	B	I	T	E	R
H	U	L	A	■	A	I	D	■	D	E	M	I
S	P	A	C	E	■	B	R	A	■	N	U	B
■	■	■	T	U	B	A	■	I	M	P	■	■
C	L	I	M	B	S	■	P	I	R	A	T	E
A	O	N	E	■	H	Y	D	R	O	G	E	N
S	P	U	N	■	E	A	R	■	F	U	N	D
H	E	M	S	■	S	P	Y	■	S	E	T	S

Yesterday's answer 2-4

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	8	■	9	10	11
12				■	13				■	14		
15				16					■	17		
18						■	■	19	20			
■	■	■	21		■	22	23				■	■
24	25	26		■	27			■	28		29	30
31			■	■	32			■	■	33		
34			35	■	36			■	37			
■	■	38		39			■	40		■	■	■
41	42				■	■	43			44	45	46
47			■	48	49	50						
51			■	52					53			
54			■	55					56			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Brandon "Bug" Hall, 25; Oscar De La Hoya, 37; Clint Black, 48; Alice Cooper, 62

Happy Birthday: You will have to take advantage of every tax incentive, sale or good deal that comes along. The more aggressive you are, the better positioned you will become throughout the year. Don't let someone else's dilemmas hold you back. Keep your emotions out of the mix and focus on the future. Your numbers are 5, 14, 17, 21, 28, 30, 46

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You have to focus on what's important and not what's unavailable. It's the here-and-now that will lead you to a better future. Handle whatever situation you face with dignity and grace and it will lead you in a positive direction. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Avoid emotional outbreaks. Stay level and pick your battles wisely. Don't let anyone take advantage but don't engage in a war. Walk away and pursue something that will allow you to show your better qualities and talents. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Concentrate on methods that position you for bigger and better results. Advancement is apparent if you are willing to go above and beyond what others are offering. You have the insight and the imagination to outmaneuver the competition. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Don't let an opportunity pass you by because you are not ready to make any changes to your life. Regrets are never fun to deal with, so take action. It's time to reach unfinished dreams, goals and destinations. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Don't aggravate an already tumultuous situation. Back away and observe. Act compassionately and listen, but remain neutral and you will be the one who sits in a position of strength. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Make the effort to sort out a problem that's been brewing for some time. Make the call or visit the person and clear up any misunderstanding. Networking will enable you to take a project you want to develop to the next level. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Past experiences can teach you not to be vulnerable in the future. If you recognize some of the mistakes you have made, you will avoid a confrontation with someone who has a certain amount of control in your life. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Keep your thoughts to yourself. You will face deception that will mislead you if you are too trusting and open. Focus on creativity and developing a project that allows you to excel financially. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Pull out every possible trick if it will help you gain ground. Utilize the people you know and the talents you have to get things done to your liking. Don't take risks or leave anything to chance. Romance will flourish. ✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Don't be swindled by someone you thought you could trust. Emotional blackmail will result in a financial loss. Added responsibilities must not be taken lightly or even considered if you don't have the time to do the best job possible. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Convince someone you care for that you should be doing more together. It's up to you to make the first move. Negotiate or settle a dispute and you will feel less stress and greater freedom to pursue new avenues. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't allow your emotions to lead the way when a practical attitude will be what benefits you most. Follow your better judgment, not what someone else decides to do. Opportunity is knocking and it's important that you answer the right door. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are outgoing and stand behind your beliefs. You are a strong leader, a progressive thinker and a good friend.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	9					6		
8		5		7				
	7		2					3
		2			9			
	6						7	
			7			8		
2					5		3	
				6		9		2
		4					6	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/04

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	3	2	9	7	5	1	6	8
9	7	5	1	8	6	3	2	4
6	1	8	3	4	2	7	9	5
1	5	6	2	9	3	8	4	7
3	9	4	8	6	7	2	5	1
8	2	7	4	5	1	6	3	9
2	6	9	7	1	4	5	8	3
5	4	1	6	3	8	9	7	2
7	8	3	5	2	9	4	1	6

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/03

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CORSETS **Solution: 9 letters**

U	N	H	E	A	L	T	H	Y	R	U	T	N	E	C
N	S	Y	D	O	B	C	D	E	Z	E	E	U	Q	S
D	C	P	I	S	D	E	M	I	A	L	C	O	R	P
E	N	O	S	N	U	E	F	I	G	U	R	E	A	A
R	X	A	T	A	D	O	M	R	R	I	Y	R	G	R
G	D	C	R	T	L	I	E	U	O	E	T	O	N	W
A	R	T	I	R	O	C	G	C	L	L	N	T	I	O
R	I	S	B	T	O	N	L	E	A	O	O	I	H	M
M	G	I	U	O	E	W	T	A	S	V	V	C	T	E
E	I	A	T	P	G	M	T	O	S	T	R	L	O	N
N	R	W	Ⓔ	N	P	A	E	R	R	S	I	U	L	E
T	L	E	I	Ⓒ	P	O	I	N	I	S	I	O	C	U
F	S	C	C	E	Ⓐ	B	R	I	T	M	O	C	N	G
I	A	N	R	T	S	Ⓛ	S	T	R	I	K	S	E	O
L	I	N	E	I	N	J	U	R	Y	T	I	N	A	V

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Body, Century, Clasps, Classic, Clothing, Color, Cotton, Curvaceous, Distribute, Erect, Erotic, Excitement, Eyelet, Figure, Gird, Girls, Indigestion, Injury, Lace, Lacing, Lift, Line, Narrow, Part, Proclaimed, Ribs, Skirts, Squeezed, Support, Taper, Torso, Trim, Undergarment, Unhealthy, Vanity, Vogue, Volume, Waist, Women, Wraps

Yesterday's Answer: Power

We listened to your requests! **TREASURY #6** is the first-ever Wonderword book containing only 20 x 20 puzzles, with 75 of these large puzzles. To order, send check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.25 p&h ($14.20 total each, U.S. funds only) for the first volume. $1.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Wonderword, Universal Uclick, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

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WHATZIT Solution: Short, back and sides

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Saipan Tribune

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If you believe you have the qualities required for a position, please submit your resume on or before Friday, February 26, 2010.

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Mobil Oil Guam Inc.
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Opening Date:	Wednesday, January 6, 2010	**Closing Date:**	Until Filled		
JVA NO.	**Position Title**	**Positions**	**Salary**	**Contract**	**Location**
10-006	Deputy Director for Water Wastewater	[One Position]	Negotiable; Ungraded	Two-year	Water Wastewater, Saipan
Opening Date:	Friday, January 22, 2010	**Closing Date:**	Friday, February, 5, 2010		
JVA NO.	**Position Title**	**Positions**	**Salary**	**Contract**	**Location**
*10-0011	Accounting Specialist	[One Position]	$21,104-$25.852	Two-year	Accounting Office, Saipan

** This is a re-announcement of JVA 09-030. All applicants of 09-030 will be included in 10-011.*

For more information about the position(s) being advertised, please stop by the Human Resources Office on the third floor of the Joeten Dandan Building.

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• 5-Liner	**$24**	**$39**
• 3-Liner with picture	**$24**	**$42**
• 5-Liner with picture	**$36**	**$57**

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

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- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

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REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

TROHS PORT STARBOARD

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Find today's solution in this section

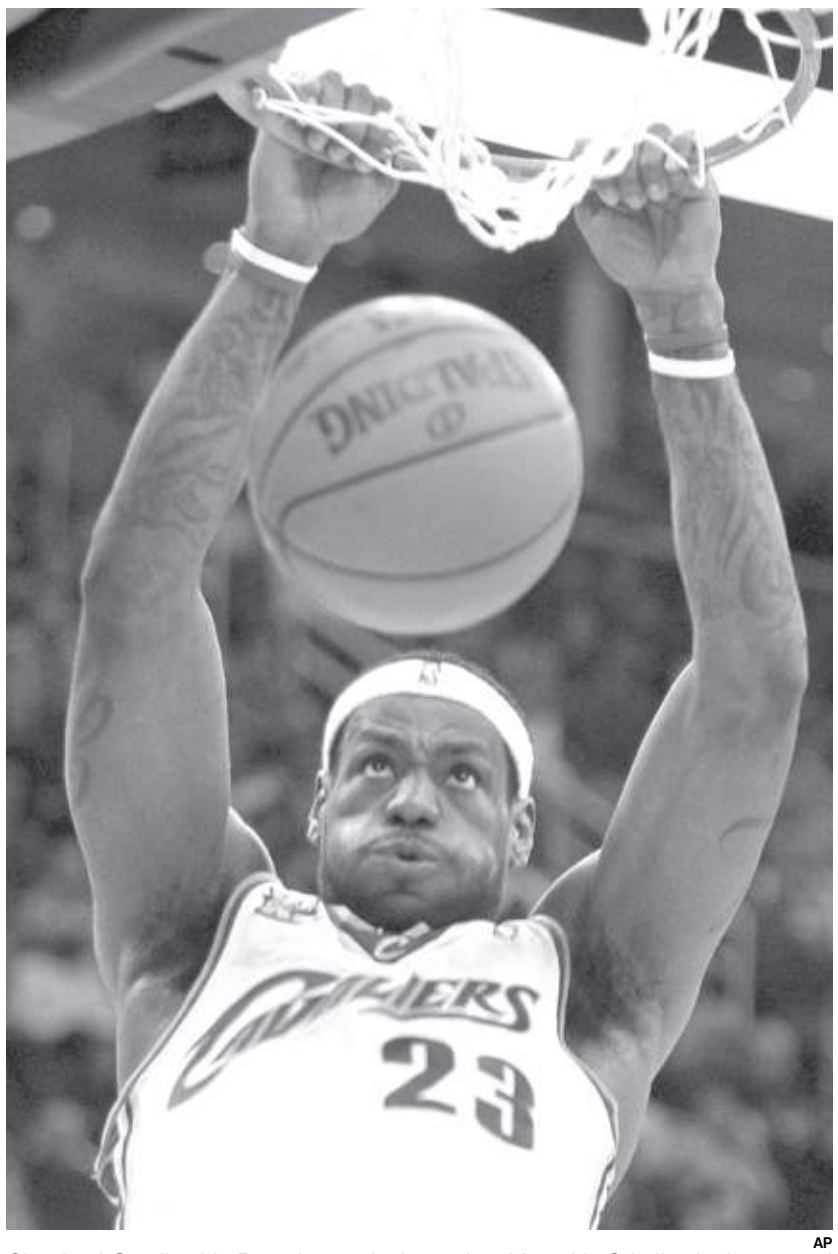
James sets career high for assists as Cavs win

CLEVELAND (AP)—LeBron James tied a career high with 15 assists to help the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the worn-down Memphis Grizzlies 105-89 on Tuesday for their ninth straight NBA victory.

James scored 22 but was more focused on setting up his teammates. It was the fifth time in six games he has had at least 10 assists, accepting the challenge of running Cleveland's offense while the club waits for guards Mo Williams and Delonte West to return from injuries.

Shaquille O'Neal ruled beneath the hoop, collecting 13 points and 13 rebounds in 21 minutes as Cleveland again won comfortably—the Cavaliers have won their past four games by an average of 19 points.

Rudy Gay scored 15 for Memphis, playing its fourth game in five nights.



AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James dunks against Memphis Grizzlies in the second quarter in an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2010, in Cleveland.

Thunder 106, Hawks 99

In Oklahoma City, Kevin Durant had 33 points and 11 rebounds as Oklahoma City recovered from blowing a 13-point lead and still beat Atlanta.

Durant became the first player since Allen Iverson nine seasons ago to score at least 25 points in 22 consecutive games. He made two free throws with 10 seconds left to complete a perfect 14-for-14 night at the foul line.

With Atlanta within two points, Durant hit jump shot of back-to-back possessions to make it 97-93 and then set up a three points by Jeff Green and a layup by Russell Westbrook that sealed the result.

Green finished with 19 points.

Magic 99, Bucks 82

In Orlando, Florida, Vince Carter had 17 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists to lead undermanned Orlando over Milwaukee.

The struggling shooting guard had by far his most efficient game in more than a month, giving Orlando its seventh win in eight games.

Charlie Bell and Luke Ridnour had 13 points apiece for the Bucks, who had their three-game winning streak snapped. Milwaukee fell to 0-3 against Orlando this season.

Clippers 90, Bulls 82

In Chicago, Los Angeles snapped a four-game losing skid with a surprise win over Chicago.

Chris Kaman had 21 points and 11 rebounds in his return from injury and Eric Gordon scored 24 points for the Clippers.

Back home after finishing a long road trip with five impressive victories over good Western Conference teams, the Bulls shot 38 percent and committed 20 turnovers in losing to the struggling Clippers.

Luol Deng scored 16 of his 18 points in the first quarter for Chicago.

NBA BRIEFS

Celtics' Pierce day-to-day with sprained left foot

BOSTON (AP)—The Boston Celtics say Paul Pierce has a sprained left foot and is listed as day-to-day. Pierce was hurt Monday during the first quarter of the Celtics' 99-88 victory at Washington. He scored 12 points in 28 minutes before sitting out the final period. The All-Star forward and MVP of the 2008 NBA finals leads the Celtics with 18.9 points per game. Boston, which has struggled with injuries this season, most notably to Kevin Garnett, hosts Miami on Wednesday night.

Nets assistant coach Del Harris resigns

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)—Longtime NBA coach Del Harris has resigned as an assistant coach with the New Jersey Nets. The Nets issued a statement from Harris minutes after they lost 97-93 to the Detroit Pistons on Tuesday night. Harris joined the team in late November after general manager Kiki Vandeweghe was named the interim coach following the firing of Lawrence Frank after the Nets lost their first 17 games. A former head coach with Houston, Milwaukee and the Lakers, Harris came to New Jersey to help Vandeweghe with his first head coaching assignment. The 72-year-old said Vandeweghe was able to handle the job by himself. Harris said he was returning home to Dallas, adding he enjoyed his time with the Nets (4-43). "I had not experienced such a losing situation since 1983, but because the players are such good people, the losing of games did not become the chaotic situation that has happened to so many teams who were locked into a total rebuilding year," Harris said in a statement. The Nets have been competitive in their last four games and Harris said he thinks the team is getting over the hump. "I have enjoyed my time here," he said. "There is no negative to this story. It's all good, but just time to go."

Pacers 130, Raptors 115

In Indianapolis, Toronto's run of five straight wins was ended in a high-scoring encounter against Indiana.

Danny Granger scored 23 points and Troy Murphy had 20 points and 14 rebounds as Indiana got its first win in four.

Lester Conner coached the Pacers in place of Jim O'Brien, who attended a family funeral.

Chris Bosh had 35 points and 15 rebounds for the Raptors.

Rockets 119, Warriors 97

In Houston, Aaron Brooks and Carl Landry scored 24 points apiece to lead Houston over Golden State.

The Rockets still finished their season-longest six-game homestand with a disappointing 2-4 record.

Monta Ellis scored 34 points for the Warriors, who've lost six in a row overall and 12 of their past 13 road games. Corey Maggette, Golden State's second-leading scorer, sat out with a hip injury.

The Rockets shot 50 percent and outrebounded the Warriors 57-35 to beat Golden State for the ninth straight time.

Pistons 97, Nets 93

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Detroit won its first game in six by edging dismal New Jersey.

Tayshaun Prince slammed down a dunk on an inbounds play with 46 seconds left to put the Pistons ahead to stay.

Richard Hamilton had 11 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter, including three free throws in the final 21 seconds.

Brook Lopez led New Jersey with 27 points on 11-of-16 shooting from the field. The Nets were outscored 10-2 in the final 2:22.

McCarron offers apology; tour mulls options

Scott McCarron has apologized to Phil Mickelson for using the word "cheating" when he disagreed with Mickelson and others who use the Ping Eye2 wedges that are only allowed because of a legal loophole.

PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem met with players at the Northern Trust Open late Tuesday afternoon in Los Angeles and, according to one player, said the tour was working with Ping to figure out a solution.

The player spoke on condition of anonymity because Finchem asked that he be the first to speak publicly to the media Wednesday morning.

The tour likely would not be able to invoke a local rule banning the wedge at Riviera this week.

McCarron caused a furor last week at Torrey Pines when he told The San Francisco Chronicle about Mickelson using Ping wedges with square grooves, "It's cheating, and I'm appalled Phil has put it in play."

Mickelson said he had been "publicly slandered" and hinted at legal action.

McCarron told The Golf Channel as other reporters looked on Tuesday evening: "I'm certainly sorry for it. I'd like to apologize to Phil Mickelson for what I said. We both realize we're on the same page on this issue."

Whether that was enough to satisfy Mickelson remained to be seen.

McCarron also apologized in the meeting, according to the player.

The USGA changed its rules to outlaw square grooves with a certain depth and volume, now requiring grooves that are more shallow with rounded edges, which some refer to as V-shaped grooves. The idea is to reduce spin and make hitting into the fairway more important.

However, the Ping Eye2 wedges made before April 1, 1990, are approved for play, even though the grooves don't conform. That's because Ping's legal settlement with the USGA (in 1990) and PGA Tour (in 1993) take precedence over any rule changes.

The player at the meeting said Finchem apologized to players for the PGA Tour not realizing some competitors—Mickelson, John Daly and Hunter Mahan, among others—would use clubs that were at least 20 years old.

Among the considerations were to find a solution with Ping and John Solheim, the chairman and CEO of the equipment company; or to look into the possibility of creating its own set of rules, the player said.

Solheim had said in a statement Monday that the tour could not establish a local rule that was different from the USGA. Solheim also said he was willing to discuss a "workable solution."

Earlier Tuesday, three-time major champion Padraig Harrington said he was contemplating using the Ping wedges at Riviera.

"I'm kind of waiting to see what the tour's direction is," Harrington said. "What I'm doing is I'm preparing myself for all eventualities. It would be naive not to. I did some good testing yesterday. Unfortunately, the testing showed up exactly what you would expect, and there's a significant difference. I think that significant difference depends on the players."

Steve Stricker said he was surprised how divisive the Ping wedges have become.

"The rule isn't very good," he said. "We have conforming grooves, but yet we can play a set of grooves that were legal back in 1990. I think the rule just needs to be altered. Hopefully, we get it straightened out and we all get on an even playing surface." ***(AP)***

A's get Willy Taveras from Reds

CINCINNATI (AP)—A trade that saved some money made the Cincinnati Reds' next shortstop affordable.

The Reds sent center fielder Willy Taveras to the Oakland Athletics on Monday as part of a four-player deal, then agreed to a $3.02 million, one-year deal with Orlando Cabrera to become their starting shortstop. Both teams made a series of moves that changed the looks of their rosters.

Along with Taveras, the Reds sent infielder Adam Rosales to the A's for infielder Aaron Miles and a player to be named. Oakland was busy as well, agreeing with outfielder Gabe Gross on a $750,000, one-year contract and claiming infielder Steve Tolleson off waivers from Minnesota.

Once the A's got Taveras, they designated him for assignment, along with left-hander Dana Eveland, to create space on their 40-man roster for the newcomers.

"I think we've been able to do some things to improve our club where we weren't too sure we would be in position to do that," Reds general manager Walt Jocketty said. "A lot of it was being patient and waiting for the market to drop to our level, where we could afford to do some things."

Cabrera got a deal that pays him a $1.25 million signing bonus and $770,000 salary this year. The agreement includes a $4 million mutual option for 2011. If Cabrera declines it, he gets a $500,000 buyout. If he accepts it and the team declines, he receives a $1 million buyout.

Cincinnati traded shortstop Alex Gonzalez to Boston last August, leaving the position to Paul Janish, a solid defensive player who batted .211.

Several teams were interested in Cabrera as a second baseman, making the Reds a more attractive destination because he could play his natural position.

"A little bit," Cabrera said. "But I think the challenge of the Reds is better for me."

The 35-year-old shortstop played for Oakland and Minnesota last season, batting a combined .284 with 36 doubles, nine homers and 77 RBIs in 160 games. Cincinnati expects to bat him second, with 25-year-old Drew Stubbs in line to bat leadoff now that Taveras is gone.

Manning the biggest star by far on Media Day

AP
Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning (18) answers a question during media day for NFL football Super Bowl XLIV Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2010, in Miami.

MIAMI (AP)—Peyton Manning worked the room masterfully. He took questions from all directions, throwing in plenty of eye contact. He spoke glowingly when necessary, took a few stabs at humor and steered away from anything that might come across as controversial.

Yes, the Indianapolis Colts quarterback handled Super Bowl media day with the same aplomb he shows at the line of scrimmage.

Manning, a four-time MVP and clearly the biggest star in South Florida, spoke on a wide range of subjects Tuesday without revealing a whole lot we didn't already know. He certainly didn't provide any bulletin-board fodder to Sunday's opponent, the New Orleans Saints.

Heck, that's his hometown, the city where his father Archie played and still lives. If the Colts weren't trying to win a title of their own, Manning would've been the Saints' biggest fan. He was certainly happy when they beat Minnesota in an overtime thriller to earn their first trip to the Super Bowl, a game that Manning won three years ago.

"The Saint were my team growing up," he said. "I was really excited for New Orleans, watching them win that game against the Vikings. It was exciting to see the French Quarter empty in the third quarter and then be packed after the game. I had a lot of friends down there tell me what it was like."

Manning said he also appreciates the history of the Colts, dating back to their days in Baltimore. In fact, one of his father's favorite players was Hall of Fame quarterback Johnny Unitas (the other: Mickey Mantle).

"I understand the significance of Unitas," Manning said. "I still feel that connection to Colts history."

Not long after being drafted by Indianapolis, Manning met Saints quarterback Drew Brees, who was then playing at right-down-the-road Purdue.

"He came to see a Colts game," said Manning, who then quickly pointed out that Brees "paid for his ticket. Everything was on the up-and-up," apparently in case the NCAA was listening.

Manning didn't get any offbeat questions, but that didn't stop him from trying to add a little levity to the proceedings.

"No, I'm not superstitious," he said. "I'm just a little 'stitious. OK, that's a bad joke. Eli gave me that one. I take it back."

Later, when another reporter broached the same subject, Manning was more revealing. He doesn't carry around a rabbit's foot, but he does have a routine he goes through before every game. When he first gets to the stadium, he reads the game program from front to back. Then, exactly two hours before kickoff, he goes out to the field to throw a few balls with receiver Reggie Wayne.

Manning shied away from any questions that might have turned controversial.

For instance, when asked about Lane Kiffin bolting from Manning's alma mater, Tennessee, to take the coaching job at USC, the quarterback replied, "I'm looking forward when it comes to the situation in Knoxville. I just want to wish the best to coach Dooley," referring to Kiffin's successor Derek Dooley.

On other subjects, Manning said:

■ He misses former NFL quarterback Steve McNair, who was slain last summer by his mistress in what was ruled a murder-suicide. "There was no tougher player in the NFL than Steve McNair. I'm really proud to have shared the MVP award with him in 2003."

■ The Colts will try to establish their ground game Sunday, even though they ranked last in the NFL in rushing yards during the regular season. "I don't think you can just drop back and pass on every single play."

■ He believes the league is sincere in its efforts to deal with concussions. "I appreciate what the NFL is trying to do. The game is about being tough, but it's about being smart as well."

■ The Florida quarterback who's getting mixed reviews from NFL scouts will do better in the pros than many are expecting. "Any NFL team would be lucky to have Tim Tebow. I think about all the problems we've had on third-and-1 and fourth-and-1. He was probably 100 percent in his college career at converting those."

■ It's too early for him to assess the impact of his career, even though he's been in the league for a dozen seasons and is one win away from joining the elite group of quarterbacks who led teams to more than one Super Bowl title. "When my career is over, I'll look back and reflect. But it's so year-to-year right now."

During his hour-long session, Manning took just under 80 questions and was often surrounded by up to 100 reporters, photographers and cameramen - all crammed into an area not much bigger than the hotel rooms most fans are staying in this week.

Not surprisingly, putting that many people into such a confined space can cause tensions to rise. Police had to be called to settle a dispute between two media members who jostled for prime real estate even before Manning arrived. But everyone came to an uneasy truce.

Bush a star and disappointment at same time

MIAMI (AP)—Reggie Bush can make the spectacular look routine.

And he can make the routine look too hard to handle.

Since the New Orleans Saints made the dynamic running back from Southern California the second overall pick in the 2006 draft, Bush has been a revelation and a disappointment. At times, he resembles the breathtaking game-breaker who won the Heisman Trophy in 2005. Then he morphs into a fumbling, pass-dropping, injury-ravaged nonentity - a third-stringer with little impact in the NFL's most potent offense.

Unquestionably, the Saints need him to display every one of his award-winning talents and none of his weaknesses in Sunday's Super Bowl against the Indianapolis Colts.

"I haven't lived up to the expectations I set for myself," Bush admitted Tuesday while seated on a podium at media day, surrounded by dozens of reporters. "Before I got to the NFL, I thought it would be the Super Bowl every year, make the Pro Bowl every year. You discover it's hard. It's hard to get to the Super Bowl. I've been in the league four years and just got here. There's a lot of great players who never get to the Super Bowl.

"I haven't lived up to the expectations I set for myself," he repeated, "but I know it will come.

"All I want to do is be the best player ever to play this game, and I'd be remiss if I didn't feel that way," Bush said. "If I didn't feel that way when I step on the field, I'd be selling myself short."

Some might argue Bush has come up far too short for the Saints. He hasn't made the Pro Bowl or All-Pro team. He hasn't approached 1,000 yards rushing in any season, and his career total of 1,940 yards is 66 fewer than second-year back Chris Johnson's for the Titans in 2009.

He hasn't beaten out Pierre Thomas, an undrafted free agent in 2007, for the starting job, but, worse, sometimes Bush is coach Sean Payton's third choice to carry the ball. His second choice is another undrafted player, Mike Bell.

Then there is Bush's inability to stay in the lineup. He's missed 12 of 48 regular-season games with a variety of knee injuries.

Ah, but then there are glimpses of greatness.

Two of them came in the divisional round victory over Arizona: an 83-yard punt return and a 46-yard run, each for scores. On both, Bush's burst past would-be tacklers was jaw-dropping.

Bush generally has lived up to his billing as a punt returner and is an important piece of Payton's passing schemes—so much so that opponents must plan for him at all times, even to the point of making sure a cornerback covers him.

"They have really good backs, fast backs with Reggie Bush," Colts linebacker Clint Session said. "We try not to get a lot of separation with a guy like him in the open field, so we're probably playing him a little tighter than normal.

"We have to know the beast, as we call it. Know the beast, respect his speed, and try to keep a close eye on him."

The Colts have a practice squad player named Taj Smith who is quite elusive, but as Session notes, Smith is no beast. And no Bush.

"That's a once-in-a-lifetime athlete that you'll see," Session said.

That's what everyone expected to see when Bush landed in New Orleans four years ago. Even members of the local archdiocese who often attend Saints games suggested Bush was destined to come to their city; after all, there was a St. Reginald of Orleans in France in the 13th century.

When the Houston Texans drafted defensive end Mario Williams with the first overall pick, the Saints never hesitated to select Bush, whose resume at USC included two national titles.

His rookie season was impressive, at times dazzling. He scored nine touchdowns, combined for 1,307 yards from scrimmage, and helped the Saints reach the NFC championship game for the first time since their inception in 1967.

He was healthy. He was productive. He was a budding superstar.

Since then, not so much.

Plagued by knee woes and inconsistency, Bush at times became an afterthought. The Saints didn't make the playoffs in 2007 and '08, and Bush made more headlines for his relationship with celebrity model and pitchwoman Kim Kardashian and his role in potential recruiting violations at USC.

Left knee surgery at the end of 2008 and a long recuperation slowed Bush for early parts of the 2009 schedule. The brilliant Bush didn't truly return until the Cardinals game last month.

"I've always been my biggest critic," he said. "I've always set the highest goals for myself. I aspire to be the MVP of the league, of the Super Bowl, all the highest goals that I can set. Eventually it's going to happen for me."

Maybe on Sunday.

Injured Freeney still hopes to play in the Super Bowl

MIAMI (AP)—Colts defensive end Dwight Freeney still hopes to play in the Super Bowl despite a torn ligament in his right ankle.

"Hopefully, towards the end of the week it starts to get better," Freeney said at Tuesday's media day. "The decision will come later on in the week. It's kind of early now."

An All-Pro player, Freeney wore a pair of flip-flops to the morning session. His injured ankle was unwrapped.

"Very discouraging" was how he described his inability to practice for Sunday's NFL title game against the New Orleans Saints.

"The competitor in me says they'll never stop me from being on the field," he said with a laugh before adding: "There's some pain there definitely, with throwing everything at it, all types of techniques, to find the best thing to get this thing as good as possible. You name it, I've probably done it."

Freeney injured the ankle in the AFC championship game against the New York Jets and said the chances of working out later this week weren't good.

He's the only starter on either team who might miss the game because of injury.

Freeney said he's enlisted the help of chiropractors, slept in an oxygen chamber, used ice, regular therapy and anything else team doctors prescribed, to try to get the ankle to heal.

Despite everything, his teammates still believe Freeney will be on the field Sunday.

Defensive lineman Raheem Brock, who would replace Freeney in the lineup, took it a step further.

"I think he'll be back and playing third downs. And I think he'll be effective, until I see something different," Brock said.

Freeney, the former league sacks champ, led the Colts with 13 1/2 sacks and is considered the team's defensive leader.

NMASA meeting tonight, Games deposit due

Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association will hold its monthly membership meeting starting at 7pm today at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

NMASA president Michael White said aside from the usual election of the previous month's top athletes and students athletes, the group will also tackle details on the 2009 NMASA Sports Banquet.

The event, which celebrates the athlete, student athlete, and coach of the year as well as the NMASA's newest inductee to the sports Hall of Fame, is set for Feb. 16.

White also reminded sports organizations that will be sending athletes to the 2010 Micronesian Games in Palau that the first installment of deposit ($175) for the quadrennial event is due today.

"No exceptions and no extensions, except for the large team sports, baseball and basketball. We have deadlines to meet, and if the deposit isn't paid, then your federation isn't going to participate in the Games," he said in an e-mail.

The 2010 Micro Games is scheduled from Aug. 1 to 10, 2010 and aside from the CNMI, other Micronesian island-nations expected to participate in the seventh staging of the quadrennial meet are Guam, Yap, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Chuuk, Kiribati, and the Marshall Islands.

They will compete in 15 disciplines, namely baseball, lawn tennis, swimming, triathlon, athletics, basketball, Micro All-Around, outrigger canoe, spearfishing, fast-pitch softball, table tennis, weightlifting, beach volleyball, indoor volleyball, and wrestling.

Like in previous monthly meetings, NMASA will also vote for the best athletes for last month (January) in four categories (male, female, male student, and female student).

White also reminded associations that will be nominating their athletes to submit written nominations in multiple copies to be distributed to members during the meeting. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Athletics is one of the 15 events lined up for the 2010 Micronesian Games in Palau this August.

SAIPAN

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Diamond's five players on the court lost focus, as their teammates and even supporters were shouting conflicting instructions, turning things from bad to worse on both the team's offense and defense. Even Diamond coach Boy Garcia did not know what hit them and had problems switching players to neutralize the trio of Sanciangco, Pagarao, and Estolas. The Diamond mentor was often seen scratching his head in frustration and even conceded the game early, entering the final two-minute mark when he mumbled in the sidelines that all was lost for them after Saipan Fresh went ahead, 100-96.

Sanciangco made 13 points in the crucial fourth quarter, Pagarao tallied five, while Estolas drilled eight, including four free throws in the stretch.

A Sanciango layup gave Saipan Fresh a 100-96 lead, entering the final two minutes of the match. Darwin Barbo cut the lead to two, 98-100, after a fastbreak layup, but that was the closest Diamond would cut the deficit, as two errors sealed the doom for the dethroned champions.

Glenn Mercurio was called for an offensive foul and when Diamond regained possession, Junar Guiab failed to catch Esdrelon's entry pass to the left baseline. Esdrelon also missed important free throws in the last one minute of the match, as he went only 1-for-4 at the stripe and was held to a field goal in the fourth period.

Saipan Fresh sealed the win from the foul line, going 8-for-10 with Estolas making 4-for-4, Pagarao drilling 3-for-4, and Leo Factor splitting his charities.

Payback time for Loyola

A week after absorbing a 71-82 loss at the hands Wushin Corp, in the first round of the playoffs, Loyola returned the favor, beating their former tormentor black and blue.

A strong start, built on good defense and balanced offense, gave Loyola an early double-digit lead, 25-15.

The trio of Jun Tabora, Ed Cosino and Danny Bicera combined for 20 points in the opening quarter to give Loyola a big lift and the team more than doubled Wushin's output in the first half when James Abuy and Ferdie de la Torre joined the scoring spree in the second half.

De la Torre made eight points, Abuy added seven, and Tabora chipped in eight more points, increasing Loyola's lead to 31 at the break, 56-25.

Wushin, which made several fastbreak plays and long jumpers in its first playoff win over Loyola, was lost on offense in the first half. Only Sonny Ebuen made more than a field goal in the first period, but the shooting forward was held to two points in the second canto. Art Trajano was the lone Wushin player to tally more than a field goal in the second quarter. Ferdie Tobias, who logged 15 points in their previous win, was limited to two points.

Edel Carino tried to rally back Wushin in the third, canning two triples, but Loyola still maintained its more than 20-point lead. Midway in the final quarter, Loyola started using its benchwarmers, which kept the team's momentum as they padded the lead to more than 40 points.

A triple from Michael Moran in the last three seconds of the match put the icing on the cake on Loyola's lopsided win. Loyola will face perennial rival Ebisuya in the short best-of-three finals series starting tonight.

Masters

University of Loyola 106 – Tabora 26, Pineda 16, de la Torre 14, Cosino 11, Bicera 10, Abuy 9, Jinang 8, Manalili 8, Moran 7, Salazar 1.

Wushin Corp. 72 – Lansang 18, Carino 13, S. Ebuen 12, Trajano 10, Dayrit 7, O. Ebuen 4, Samson 4, Garon 2, Tobias 2, Leong 2.

Scoring by quarters: 25-14, 56-25, 79-49, 106-72.

Open

Saipan Fresh Market 108 – Estolas 27, Pagarao 23, Sanciangco 16, Factor 15, Gapor 14, De Guzman 6, Rebuyon 2.

Diamond Ali'i 100 – Esdrelon 31, Barbo 12, Camacho 12, M. Capalad 10, Barrios 9, Talania 6, W. Capalad 6, Montano 6, Fernandez 3, Guiab 2.

Scoring by quarters: 17-31, 44-61, 76-79, 108-100.

JI HOON

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one match in the 2010 Sunsmart 18 and Under Canterbury Championships. Heo drew a bye in the first round of the tournament in Christchurch and posted a 6-2, 6-1 win over New Zealand's Jake McCartney. The CNMI netter advanced to the Round of 16, but lost to the eighth-seeded Chris Simich of New Zealand

Heo then traveled to Auckland and won his opening match against Thailand's Sirawit Yumuang, 6-1, 6-2. Heo's next foe was the No. 14 seed Takuma Ohashi of New Zealand and the CNMI bet also prevailed in three hard fought sets, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3, to earn the right to face the second-seeded Wagland in the third round.

Wagland then prevented Heo from advancing further with the former's straight set win. Joining the Aussie bet in the quarterfinals were compatriot Jack Schipanski, New Zealand's Anton Bettink, Adam Lee, and Jaden Grinter, Taipei's Chieh-Fu Wang, Hong Kong's James Kwun Ho, and Pakistan's Samir Iftikhar.

After completing two tournaments in New Zealand, Heo now has an 8-20 career singles record and 8-21 in doubles.

Heo will conclude his New Zealand trip with a stint in the Tennis Central 18 & U ITF Summer Championships, which will run from Feb 8 to 13 at the Renouf Tennis Centre in Wellington.

SCHEDULE

From Page 28

four others events slated this year will have the same schedule. However, these are still subject for changes.

The Art of War 4: All Island Grappling/Submission Challenge is set for June 18, while ROP 9: Indestructable is scheduled for July 30.

The second Trench Warz of the year dubbed Trench Warz 13: Vengeance will be held on Oct. 22, while Trench Tech will have its last event for 2010 via the "Warriors Collide". The last event of the year will serve as Trench Tech's fans appreciation night and it will take place on Dec. 17.

Meanwhile, tickets for the Rites of Passage 8: Fearless are now being sold at Boarderline, 670 Rocksteady Shop, Hannam Super Market, Mobil Kagman, and Trench Tech gym in San Antonio. Ticket prizes are $20 for general admission and $30 for VIP. For every ticket sold, Trench Tech will donate $1 for the Haiti relief fund.

Korean fighters, which will be featured in three triple-threat main event will also donate $10 of their prize money to the relief fund.

Korean Top Team's Hyun Gyu Lim, "Dr. Kang" Bung Chan Kang, and Young Nam Gu will be debuting in CNMI MMA and will duel Saipan fighters. Lim will challenge Slade "The Rage" Adelbai, Kang will face Fasi "Quikdraw" Jesse, and Gu will meet Chris "No Love" Laayug.

Ten preliminary bouts featuring combatants from Guam, Saipan, and Tinian are also scheduled in next week's action in the octagon cage.

MANIBUSAN

From Page 28

lighted their victory in Saipan Golfers Association's first two-man best-ball tournament with a lone eagle made in the weekend event. The winning pair had an eagle on the par-5 No. 3 and birdied hole Nos. 9, 11, and 12. The eventual champions also saved par in 14 holes in a bogey-free game and logged the second best score in the front nine with their 1-under par 35 before drilling finishing strong with a 4-unde par 32 on the back.

A best-ball competition format is played by teams consist of two players. Each player on the team plays his own ball until completing the hole, then the lower of the two scores is recorded as the team score for that hole.

The eight other pairs who joined SGA's weekend tournament and their gross scores in parentheses were Ray San Nicolas and Joe Sablan (72), Allan Perez and Bob Magofna (72), Joe Demapan and Art Deleon Guerrero (73), Nick and Frances Sablan (74), John L. Babauta and Joe Deleon Guerrero (74), Jess Castro and Ben Aldan (75), Steve Balakrishna and Mariano Fajardo (75), Ray Dela Cruz and John Cruz (76), and Das Krishnan and Larry Deleon Guerrero (78).

The pairs of Jang and Sablan and Perez and Magofna won in the longest drive contests on hole Nos. 5 and 7, respectively. Four tandems recorded greenies, namely Dela Cruz and Cruz (No. 6), Babauta and Joe Deleon Guerrero (No. 8), Manibusan and Takai (No. 12), and Jang and Ed Sablan (No.15).

Meanwhile, SGA is reminding its members that more best-ball tournaments will be scheduled this year.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	30	16	.652	–
Toronto	26	23	.531	5 1/2
New York	18	29	.383	12 1/2
Philadelphia	16	31	.340	14 1/2
New Jersey	4	43	.085	26 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	33	16	.673	–
Atlanta	30	17	.638	2
Charlotte	24	23	.511	8
Miami	24	24	.500	8 1/2
Washington	16	31	.340	16

Central Division

Cleveland	39	11	.780	–
Chicago	23	23	.500	14
Milwaukee	21	26	.447	16 1/2
Indiana	17	32	.347	21 1/2
Detroit	16	31	.340	21 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	30	18	.625	–
San Antonio	27	19	.587	2
Houston	26	22	.542	4
Memphis	26	22	.542	4
New Orleans	26	22	.542	4

Northwest Division

Denver	33	15	.688	–
Utah	29	18	.617	3 1/2
Portland	29	21	.580	5
Oklahoma City	27	21	.563	6
Minnesota	11	38	.224	22 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	37	12	.755	–
Phoenix	29	21	.580	8 1/2
L.A. Clippers	21	27	.438	15 1/2
Sacramento	16	31	.340	20
Golden State	13	34	.277	23

Yesterday's Games

Indiana 130, Toronto 115
Cleveland 105, Memphis 89
Orlando 99, Milwaukee 82
Detroit 97, New Jersey 93
L.A. Clippers 90, Chicago 82
Oklahoma City 106, Atlanta 99
Houston 119, Golden State 97

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Anthony, DEN	38	384	327	1130	29.7
Durant, OKC	47	462	400	1392	29.6
James, CLE	49	489	376	1443	29.4
Bryant, LAL	49	514	295	1388	28.3
Wade, MIA	48	454	336	1295	27.0
Ellis, GOL	44	448	205	1137	25.8
Nowitzki, DAL	47	423	309	1184	25.2
Bosh, TOR	48	409	330	1154	24.0
Roy, POR	40	328	213	924	23.1
Johnson, ATL	46	388	129	984	21.4
Jamison, WAS	38	301	146	804	21.2
Randolph, MEM	47	395	193	989	21.0
Stoudemire, PHX	50	395	260	1050	21.0
Maggette, GOL	45	296	332	933	20.7
Evans, SAC	42	312	214	859	20.5
Jackson, CHA	47	348	191	955	20.3
Kaman, LAC	41	345	138	828	20.2
Gay, MEM	45	341	181	900	20.0
Duncan, SAN	43	333	183	849	19.7
Rose, CHI	45	376	131	887	19.7

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Perkins, BOS	212	339	.625
Howard, ORL	275	459	.599
Gasol, MEM	261	436	.599
Hilario, DEN	254	436	.583
Horford, ATL	257	453	.567
Bynum, LAL	291	513	.567
Millsap, UTA	215	383	.561
O'Neal, CLE	200	359	.557
Haywood, WAS	177	318	.557
Lee, NYK	387	701	.552

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, ORL	48	175	466	641	13.4
Noah, CHI	44	171	367	538	12.2
Camby, LAC	46	145	406	551	12.0
Randolph, MEM	47	210	341	551	11.7
Lee, NYK	47	118	422	540	11.5
Bosh, TOR	48	146	402	548	11.4
Wallace, CHA	46	95	410	505	11.0
Duncan, SAN	43	141	320	461	10.7
Boozer, UTA	45	86	396	482	10.7
Haywood, WAS	46	192	286	478	10.4

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Paul, NOR	38	424	11.2
Nash, PHX	50	556	11.1
Rondo, BOS	45	437	9.7
Williams, UTA	42	406	9.7
Kidd, DAL	47	432	9.2
James, CLE	49	394	8.0
B. Davis, LAC	47	374	8.0
Westbrook, OKC	47	346	7.4
Arenas, WAS	32	230	7.2
Duhon, NYK	47	298	6.3

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

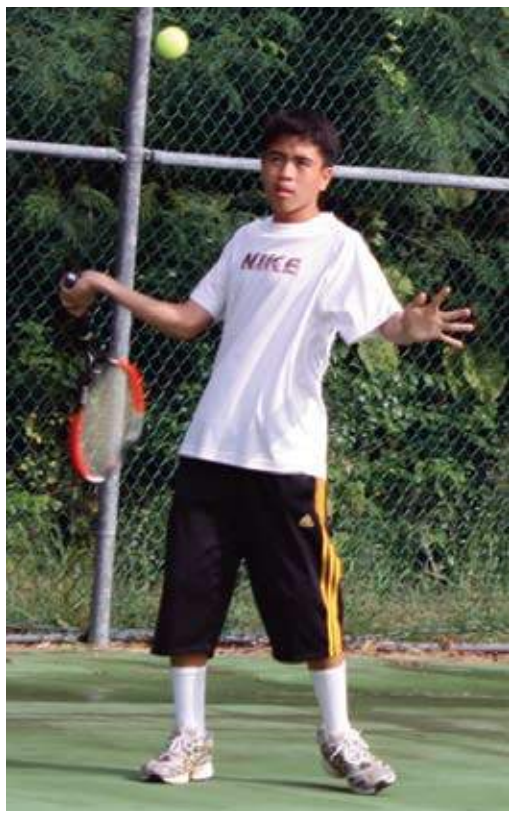
2010 Saipan Tennis Challenge

PHOTOS By
ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Lila Mailman returns to Jodel Fernandez.

Jeff Race stretches to a return to Peter Loyola during their men's open singles finals.

Clay McCullough-Stearns goes for a double backhand return against Matthew Lopez in the Level 4 division of the 2010 Saipan Tennis Challenge played at the AMP tennis courts.



Matthew Lopez makes a return from the backline against Clay McCullough-Stearns.

Phalai Frink chases a low ball during her match against Minsik Kim.

Luther Lizama sets his eyes on the ball during his match against Moris Villanueva in the Level 3 division.

Kwang Jae returns to Carol Lee during their Level 2 finals game.

Jodel Fernandez in action against Lila Mailman during their women's open singles game.

Amami Sakano prepares to serve Seiya Eda during their men's 2.0 singles match.

Lydia Tan returns to Lila Mailman during their round-robin game in the women's open singles.

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James sets career high for assists as Cavs win
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Saipan Fresh, Loyola advance to finals

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan Fresh Market and University of Loyola's playoffs tales featured different beginnings, but had the same ending—a finals entry.

Loyola demolished Wushin Corp. from start to finish to nail a 106-72 triumph Tuesday night at the JP Center Basketball Court and gained the last finals seat in the masters division of the 2009 PILCOWA Basketball League.

Saipan Fresh also secured an entry to the best-of-three finals in the open division after playing catch-up most of the way en route to a come-from-behind win against dethroned champion Diamond Ali'i, 108-100.

Diamond led by as much as 20 points in the second quarter, 54-34, but started collapsing in the closing minutes of the third period to falter in its bid for a return trip to the finals. Diamond defeated MIGS in the inaugural PILCOWA caging in 2008. Now, it will be Saipan Fresh against Noni Saipan in the best-of-three championship series that will start tonight.

A finals stint seemed far-fetched for Saipan Fresh, as it struggled in the first half against the hot-shooting Diamond.

Elmer Esdrelon exploded for 15 first-quarter points, giving Diamond a 31-19, and the erstwhile champion was still on top by double digits at the break, 61-44, with Esdrelon knocking down nine more points.

At the start of the second half, Saipan Fresh slowly made moves to come back behind Lerio Pagarao and Gil Gapor. The duo combined for 20 points in the third and Saipan Fresh gained momentum when Ryan Sanciangco reported for the game in the closing minutes of that canto. Sanciangco announced his presence in the match with a 3-point play and Saipan Fresh moved within three, 76-79, entering the final canto.

A Sanciangco layup tied the game for the first time, 81-all, and Jun Estolas finally gave Saipan Fresh the lead, 83-81, after making a fastbreak layup off Diamond's error.

Deadlocks and lead changes were seen in the ensuing plays until a disorganized and foul-plagued Diamond could no longer handle the pressure in the last four minutes of the game.

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
University of Loyola's Ferdie de la Torre goes up for a layup against Wushin Corp. during their semifinal game in the masters division of the PILCOWA caging on Tuesday at the JP Center Basketball Court.

Ji Hoon climbs up Jr. ITF rankings

Heo

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Ji Hoon Heo moved up the Junior ITF rankings despite ending his winning streak in the 2010 Auckland 18 & Under ITF Summer Championships at the Scarbro Tennis Centre in Glen Innes, Auckland yesterday.

The CNMI bet lost to tournament No. 2 seed Ben Wagland of Australia in the third round, foiling Heo's bid for a quarterfinals seat in his second tournament. Wagland shut out Heo in the opening set, 6-0, before the latter gave the Australian a good fight in the second set, which the Commonwealth netter eventually lost, 2-6.

Despite the loss in the third round, Heo is guaranteed Junior ITF ranking points after his two early victories in the Auckland tournament, a Grade 3 event under the Junior ITF circuit.

Heo earned 15 ranking points for making it to the third round of the tournament and from No. 833 he is now ranked No. 752 in the world. At the start of the year before leaving for New Zealand, Heo occupied the No. 1,124 in the rankings.

The CNMI bet began his New Zealand trip in Christchurch, winning only

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Manibusan, Takai rule SGA's best ball

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Former CNMI Superior Court presiding judge Ed Manibusan and John Takai bested 11 other pairs to top the 2010 SGA Group Best Ball Tournament held on Sunday at the Kingfisher Golf Links.

Manibusan and Takai combined for a gross score of 5-under par 67, winning the tournament by one stroke against the pair of Steve Jang and Ed Sablan, who tallied a 4-under par 68. Completing the Top 3 were Jung Teack and Martin Sablan, who logged a 2-under par 70.

The Top 3 finishers received cash prizes with the champions receiving $200, $140 for runners-up, and $110 for third placers.

Manibusan and Takai high-

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Manibusan

Takai

Schedule of Trench Warz 12 changed

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Trench Tech made minor changes to its calendar of events for 2010.

From April 23, Trench Warz 12: Battle Brawl has been moved to May 21 to give combatants and organizers more time to prepare.

If Trench Tech will follow its original schedule, Trench Wars 12 will take center stage two months after the MMA group holds its inaugural event of the year—Rites of Passage 8: Fearless. ROP 8 will take place on Feb. 12 at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort.

Cuki Alvarez, president and promoter of Trench Tech, Inc., said the

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ROSELYN B.MONROYO
Predators' Charles Aiken and Russia's Bashir Jamlihanov engaged in a bloody brawl during the Trench Wars 11: Redemption held at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort last month.